

**Media Representation of Migrant Crime:  
Hypotheticals, Prominence, and Migration Pros and  
Cons in Select Western Newspaper Coverage**

**by  
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## **Abstract**

This content analysis examines newspaper representation of migrant criminality in Canada, the UK, and the US. Existing studies demonstrate a dynamic relationship between media coverage, perceptions of migration, and politics/lawmaking, as well as the media's role in maintaining the gap between empirical knowledge and common understanding of migrant crime. Logistic and OLS regression are employed to evaluate (1) the hypothetical discussion of migrant crime (speculative/risk-oriented content as opposed to the discussion of a real crime event), and (2) article prominence in the form of word count. Qualitative thematic analyses are used to explore the nature of (3) pro-migrant content, such as economic benefits, and (4) anti-migrant content, such as threats to values and resources. Results are considered in the contexts of rising populism, media influence and accountability, promotion of stereotypes and public concern, and the perceived risks of migration and subsequent effects on human and civil rights.

**Keywords:** crime; media accountability; media representation; migration

## **Dedication**

For Mom & Dad, who worked hard to give me the privilege of opportunity.

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## List of Acronyms

Aviac	Advocates for Victims of Illegal Alien Crime
DACA	Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GOP	Grand Old Party
ICE	Immigration and Customs Enforcement
IRB	Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada
<i>IRPA</i>	<i>Immigration and Refugee Protection Act</i>
MAVNI	Military Accessions Vital to National Interests
OLS	Ordinary Least Squares
PPC	People's Party of Canada
RQ	Research Question
SCC	Supreme Court of Canada
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
US	United States

## Glossary

Asylum seeker	Someone who is in the process of seeking protection outside their previous country of residence; whose rejection or acceptance has yet to be determined. Seeking asylum is the precursor to becoming a refugee.
Immigrant	Someone who moves to a new country with the aim of making the new country their place of residence.
Immigration	Moving from a previous country of residence to a new country of residence.
Migrant	A catch-all term for someone who has left their place of residence.
Migration	A catch-all term for leaving a place of residence.
Refugee	Someone outside their previous country of residence who is availing themselves of protection from some form of persecution or danger.

All definitions are based on terms used by the International Organization for Migration (2020).

# Chapter 1. Introduction

The 21<sup>st</sup> century has brought many advancements in the rapid communication of information, globalization, and the mobilization of numerous social justice movements around the globe. The world is also in the midst of an uptick in human displacement and migration (Esses et al., 2013), and the re-emergence of nativist populism (Amaya, 2018; Wood & Ausserladscheider, 2020). At the centre of everything, modern-day media keeps people informed, up to date, and firmly in the loop. However, media may also be implicated in some of the more problematic aspects of access to information. This study will explore the composition of news, and the role and responsibility of the media in the context of modern migration and the persistent association between migration and crime.

Despite numerous studies demonstrating otherwise, migrants are often portrayed in the media as being disproportionately criminal (Reitmanova et al., 2015; Sohoni & Sohoni, 2014). News media play an integral role in the dissemination of information to the public, and this includes representations of migrants that may lead to misconceptions regarding their criminality (Esses et al., 2013; Larsen, 2008; Mahtani, 2001; Sohoni & Sohoni, 2014). Further, media permeates the political arena, shaping policy development by influencing the presentation of information that we use to interpret our daily lives and form political opinions (Mahtani, 2001). In this way, media play a role in both the representation of ‘fact’ and the subsequent public and political reactions on both a national and a global scale (Esses et al., 2013; Krishnamurti, 2013; Sohoni & Sohoni, 2014).

Scholars note the many media drivers behind the negative public perception of migrants, such as the use of negative metaphors (Abid et al., 2017), the habitual inclusion of individuals’ migration status in the reporting of crime (Sohoni & Sohoni, 2014), and the framing of crimes committed by migrants as “immigration issues” (Sohoni & Sohoni, 2014, p. 58; see also Hopkins, 2010). The implications of this negative perception range from microaggressions, defined as individual-level acts of prejudice and hostility, to the politicization of race and culture through the criminalization of immigration (Hopkins, 2010; Sohoni & Sohoni, 2014; Stumpf, 2006). Negative perceptions persist despite data demonstrating correlations between migration and

*decreases* in crime (Krishnamurti, 2013; Mahtani, 2001; Reitmanova et al., 2015; Sohoni & Sohoni, 2014; Stowell et al., 2009). This persistence highlights a problematic gap between empirical research and general knowledge. However, this gap represents more than merely a frustration for the academic community; failure to reconcile the realities of migrant offending with society's notions of migrant crime risk has fomented a hostility toward migrant populations that is being used to justify egregious and flagitious policy in several so-called progressive nations. Continuing research is needed so that such failings may be properly identified, accepted, and addressed.

This study aims to explore media representations of migrant crime by identifying and examining characteristics and trends present in current media discussion of migration and non-immigration related offending (e.g., property or violent crime rather than unauthorized entry or visa infractions). English language newspaper articles are sampled from Canada, the United Kingdom (UK), and the United States (US) with the aim of representing media from similar yet distinct Western democracies, all of which have ranked within the top three most desirable destination countries for prospective migrants in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century (Fleras, 2015). Using a mixed-methods approach, newspaper coverage is quantitatively and qualitatively examined by coding for key elements and themes in the discussion of migrant criminality. The findings of this content analysis are contextualized through an application to the current global climate on migration. The possible implications of media coverage during this pivotal period of globalization and political transition are discussed.

## Chapter 2. Literature Review

Understanding the importance of media representation of migrant<sup>1</sup> crime requires a basic understanding of (a) the current legislative and ideological approach to migration in each sample country, (b) the creation and influence of news media on public perception and political agenda setting, and (c) the increasing criminalization of migration.

### 2.1. A Brief Look at Migration Policy and Ideology in Canada, the UK, and the US

Though it culminates in all three locations, each country in this study takes a somewhat different policy and ideological approach to migration. This section will give a brief overview of recent sociopolitical and legislative trends in each sample country.

#### 2.1.1. Canada

As of 2015, Canada was home to 7.6 million immigrants – 21 percent of the total population – making it the sixth largest receiving country in the world in terms of the proportion of foreign-born residents, outranking the UK and US (Pison, 2019). Canada utilizes a variety of national and international legislation to govern the flow of non-citizens across its borders. Canada is a signatory to multiple international conventions, including the United Nations (UN) 1951 *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees* and its 1967 *Protocol*, that deal with the regulation of migration and the treatment of

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<sup>1</sup> In this thesis, the definitions of various forms of migration are based on the International Organization for Migration (2020):

Asylum seeker – Someone who is in the process of seeking protection outside their previous country of residence; whose rejection or acceptance has yet to be determined. Seeking asylum is the precursor to becoming a refugee.

Immigrant – Someone who moves to a new country with the aim of making the new country their place of residence.

Immigration – Moving from a previous country of residence to a new country of residence.

Migrant – A catch-all term for someone who has left their place of residence.

Migration – A catch-all term for leaving a place of residence.

Refugee – Someone outside their previous country of residence who is availing themselves of protection from some form of persecution or danger.

migrants. Paradoxically, Canada operated without its own domestic legislative framework to differentiate between immigrants and refugees until the implementation of the *Immigration Act* in 1976 (Fournier-Ruggles, 2016). This act allowed Canada to “legally fulfill its international obligations” and begin the process of legal protection for different categories of migrant persons (p. 328). Current Canadian migration law is set out in the *Citizenship Act* (1977) and the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA)* (2002).

Despite highly discriminatory early immigration regimes (Cheatham, 2020), modern day Canada has been described as “a beacon of openness, diversity, and social peace in a world of rising nativist populism” (Gordon et al., 2019, p. 2). As a veritable posterchild for multiculturalism, Canada has traditionally been depicted as having a supportive and positive attitude toward migration (Banting, 2010). Some research has shown that the stronger one’s national ties and Canadian pride, the higher the likelihood that person will support liberal migration policies, highlighting a “Canadian exceptionalism” that runs contrary to the many nations for whom a strong sense of nationalism is linked with restrictionist views on migration (p. 805).

However, Canada’s benevolent exterior may conceal a slightly less friendly reality. More recent research has explored the absence of a competitive anti-migration party in Canada and revealed that Canadians’ neighbourly approach to welcoming newcomers may be rooted in an age-old conflict between the English and the French, rather than in genuine tolerance and appreciation for diversity. According to a 2018 Angus Reid poll, 49 percent of Canadians expressed a preference for less immigration (Gordon et al., 2019). The fact that there is a “substantial proportion of the [Canadian] population that desires lower immigration” without the same kind of nativist politics seen in other countries, like the US, may be explained by the concentrated nationalism in the francophone province of Quebec and its impact on national politics (p. 2). First, nativism can be described as a position “that advocates a substantial reduction or end to current immigration flows, justified on the basis of maintaining some deemed essential characteristic of a political unit” (p. 2). In essence, it is a practice that privileges those born in a country over those who originate elsewhere. It appears that strong nationalism and separatist sentiment in Quebec have provided a buffer between anti-migration movements in Canada and political relevance:

[N]ationally-oriented right-wing parties have struggled to appeal to large parts of Quebec since the early 1990s, given the separatist inclinations of these voters, [and so] such parties were forced to compete electorally in the immigrant-dense suburbs of the big metropolitan centres if they were to have a chance at forming government... This drove these parties to moderate their stances on immigration, which has been reinforced, as in other countries, by the pro-immigration orientation of the business class who back them (p. 3).

This forced moderation has the effect of ‘splitting’ any “potential coalition among more rural and small city voters that might have resisted higher immigration levels” (Gordon et al., 2019, p. 3). However, hate crime and violence directed toward migrants, particularly Muslim migrants, in Quebec (CJPME, 2018) and a waning of interest in francophone sovereignty may signal an impending shift in priority from separatism to nationalism, which would substantially increase the opportunity for an “emergent country-wide nativist party” (Gordon et al., 2019, p. 18).

In fact, inklings of populist nativism in Canadian politics have indeed been seen in recent years. In 2015, Parliament introduced Bill C-51 – *The Anti-Terrorism Act* – which made “significant and controversial changes to national security, anti-terrorism, and privacy law” in Canada (Gill, 2015, para. 1). Notably, it allowed for “the preventative arrest and detention of a person if it is ‘likely’ to prevent a terrorist activity that a ‘peace officer’ reasonably believes ‘may’ be carried out” (para. 4). Though this bill does not contain anything explicitly referencing securitization against migration, the timing of its tabling and assent coincided with the peak of the Syrian refugee crisis and increasing acts of extremist violence emanating from the ‘Middle East’. In the 2019 federal election, the newly formed People’s Party of Canada (PPC) ran on a platform that included “ending official multiculturalism and preserving Canadian values and culture”, “ending open borders policies”, and “reducing overall levels [of immigration] and prioritizing skilled immigrants” (People’s Party, 2020, sections 5-7). Though the PPC did not secure any seats in this election, the presence of such an ‘un-Canadian’ party on a federal ballot exposed the imperfections in Prime Minister Trudeau’s proud declaration that “Canadians are among the few people around the world who are still welcoming immigration” (Ferrerias, 2019, para. 1).

Previously, in March 2019, an omnibus budget bill was tabled in the House of Commons that contained a clause denying the right to a hearing for all “refugee claimants who have sought asylum in any country holding ‘information sharing



agreements” with Canada (Asmi, 2019, para. 1). This clause was swiftly criticized for sharply curtailing the rights of refugee claimants, subordinating the authority of the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (IRB), and representing an underhanded response to the “rise in arrival of asylum-seekers to Canada” (para. 2). More recently, in July 2020, the Federal Court struck down the Safe Third Country Agreement between Canada and the United States, stating that Canada’s 16-year-long practice of “sending people back to the U.S., where they were at risk of imprisonment, violated their rights to life, liberty, and security” enshrined in *The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (Thevenot, 2020, para 4; Cheatham, 2020). This agreement, part of the US-Canada Smart Border Action Plan, was originally intended to prevent refugee claimants from landing in one (presumably safe and suitable) country and proceeding to another out of preference (Government of Canada, n.d.).

Another important factor in the Canadian migration landscape is the comparatively low level of unauthorized migration – approximately 200,000-500,000 people total as of 2015 (Cheatham, 2020; Jones, 2016). For reference, an estimated 800,000 to 1.2 million undocumented immigrants reside in the UK (Connor & Passel, 2019) while an estimated 10.5 million undocumented immigrants reside in the US (Budiman, 2020). Though punitive opposition to undocumented migration manifests in roughly half the Canadian population, like the US, many regions have “sanctuary city and ‘access without fear’ policies that limit police cooperation with immigration authorities and guarantee undocumented people public services” (Cheatham, 2020, para. 22). The limited undocumented migration to the country is a popular explanation for Canada’s enduring relative innocuity on the subject of migration (Cheatham, 2020). At least for the time being, despite catches in its multicultural fabric, Canada remains a less contentious setting for the migration debate relative to other areas of the world (Jones, 2016). Particularly notable ideological contrasts can be made with the UK and the US.

### **2.1.2. United Kingdom**

In 2011, a purported 59 percent of British citizens felt there was an excessive number of migrants in the country (Jones, 2016). This general dislike of migration has been attributed to a societal skepticism exacerbated by a festering resentment of outsiders and a lack of promotion of the benefits of diversity and multiculturalism in the

country (Andreescu, 2011; Gietel-Basten, 2016; Nevedell & Novotna, 2015). As of 2015, the UK was home to 8.4 million immigrants, making up nearly 13 percent of the total population (Pison, 2019).

Migration and border security are regulated by the British Home Office (Nevedell & Novotna, 2015). The UK context for cross-border movement is considerably more complicated than the situation in North America, owing (until recently) to the UK's membership in the European Union (EU) and its proximity to the Schengen Area (Nevedell & Novotna, 2015). Pertaining to the former, free movement between member states is a guaranteed right for EU citizens under the *Citizens' Rights Directive* of 2004 and this free movement entails "a range of social and economic rights, including the right to work in any member state" (Dennison & Geddes, 2018, pp. 1139-1140). However, in 2016, 52 percent of the British public voted to extricate the UK from the EU in favour of independence – the movement colloquially known as 'Brexit' (Gietel-Basten, 2016). The political campaign for Brexit, heavily marked by anti-immigration rhetoric, is widely recognized as heralding substantial impacts on migration and mobility within Europe (Dennison & Geddes, 2018; Gietel-Basten, 2016). Brexit, which took effect on January 31, 2020, demonstrates the UK's desire to shift from "rights-based" to "permission-based" movement between European countries (Dennison & Geddes, 2018, p. 1147) and illustrates an important turning of the tide for Britain toward nativism and nationalism that includes the curtailing and control of cross-border movement.

Previously, in 2012, then-Home Secretary Theresa May introduced the so-called hostile environment immigration policy, aiming to directly disincentivize life in the UK for undocumented residents through a series of barriers (Teachers for Migrants' and Refugees' Rights, 2016). These barriers include penalties for landlords and employers who house and hire undocumented migrants, as well as requiring medical staff to liaise with the government in relation to the migration status of patients (Teachers for Migrants' and Refugees' Rights, 2016). The hostile environment initiative has been criticized on a number of fronts, from "preventing vulnerable people from accessing basic services" to the wrongful deportation of long-term legal residents during the 2018 Windrush scandal that impacted individuals of Caribbean origin (Bulman, 2020, paras. 2-3). Moreover, there is no evidence to date that the policy "is achieving its aims of reducing illegal immigration – or ever has" (para. 1).

Some of the protectionism evident in British policy likely stems from a preoccupation with the country's limited capacity to support an increasing population; politicians have highlighted the finite nature of British resources and have advocated the importance of restricting migration through foreign and domestic policy (Gietel-Basten, 2016; Mulvey, 2010). The concern for managing migration in the UK, particularly relative to North American counterparts, may be partly explained by the geographic size of the country, as well as its physical proximity to refugee-generating regions. However, at odds with its new partly-closed-door approach, the UK is well known to rely on the support of immigrant labour to supplement its economy and continues to offer provisions for the acceptance of *skilled* individuals (Nevedell & Novotna, 2015). However, strict requirements – such as specific work experience, the capacity to earn a stated minimum salary, and proficiency in English – may create a labour shortage in the UK, where certain fields, such as nursing, are facing deficiencies despite “the British economy [being] close to full employment” (Castle, 2020, para. 14).

The juxtaposition of a society reliant on economic migration but without the public and political will to support migration as whole has been noted in recent examinations of the UK, particularly since the advent of Brexit (Dennison & Geddes, 2018). The political will and public support for ‘taking back control’ seem to have overridden “‘bread and butter’ functional concerns” regarding economic fortitude (p. 1151), as well as basic advocacy for human rights. The deeply-entrenched tension between the perceived ‘us’ and ‘them’ in the UK is likely exacerbated by an “increased issue salience” brought on by globalization and problematized by media rhetoric positioning migrant populations as scapegoats for overburdened public services and other social ills (p. 1138).

In essence, migration in the UK is as complicated in its practical application as in its sociopolitical inclination, and reflects a larger global trend in the increasing complexity of this issue. Similar tensions and contradictions related to migration can be observed in a country with which the UK has a longstanding ‘Special Relationship’: the US.

### **2.1.3. United States**

In 2015, the US was distinguished as having the highest number of immigrants in the world – 48.2 million, comprising slightly over 15 percent of the country's total population (Pison, 2019). In 2013, an attempt to reform the US immigration system

occurred with the development of the *Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act* (Jones, 2016). The bill included provisions for a “13-year path to citizenship for undocumented migrants” protection of employment rights, increases in the number of worker visas, and general protections for the rights of migrants, including those in detention centers (p. 6). The bill died in Congress after failing to appease a Republican majority and the potential benefits of the legislation were never realized (Jones, 2016; Wolgin, 2015). Despite the apparent positives that may have been introduced by this reform, the bill also contained provisions for increased border security between the US and Mexico, including “improved technology to limit unauthorized entry” into the country (Jones, 2016, p. 6). This juxtaposition highlights a mounting tension in the US between accommodating high levels of migration and simultaneously fortifying boundaries and restricting the influx of outsiders. Some scholars have suggested that it is the higher numbers of undocumented migrants in the US, relative to other countries, that have caused these tensions and the nation’s problematization and “preoccupation with immigration” (pp. 11, 13; see also Cheatham, 2020). Additionally, the highly partisan nature of US politics often results in Republican support for the curtailing of migration while Democrats tend to hold less restrictionist views (Hoewe, 2018). At present, the issue of migration in the US appears to be as much about stymying political opposition as it is about the actualities of migration.

Further illustrating the complexity of attitudes and policy in the US, the country’s large immigrant Latino population is recognized as holding substantial political power in terms of their voting influence; as such, politicians attempt to utilize the demographics of this voting population by targeting large ethnic minorities through proposals for migration reform (Jones, 2016). Such opportunism demonstrates the use of migration as a strategic political tool: As an example, former President Barack Obama’s Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) allowed a two-year deferment from deportation for certain undocumented individuals who arrived in the US as children, primarily from Central and South America (Jones, 2016). This initiative provided for the ‘regularization’ of millions of unauthorized migrants who would otherwise face return to their country of birth (Jones, 2016). In contrast, the recent Trump administration attempted to abolish DACA, claiming it has “rewarded illegal immigration” and does not include provisions for sufficient border security to counteract incentives to enter the US (Kopan, 2018, paras. 10, 16).

Interestingly, while there is “general resistance” to immigration in the country, similar to the UK, the US has (until recently) placed a great emphasis on the reunification of families within its borders (Jones, 2016, p. 5). However, demonstrating its ‘hands-off’ approach, the US relied “on individual immigrants and their families and associates to facilitate integration without the support of federal policies or funds” (p. 9). This again contrasts more recent attempts by the Trump administration to end ‘chain migration’ – a practice “whereby one immigrant can bring in their entire extended families, who can bring in their families and so on” – claiming that it “undermines national security, by failing to establish merit-based criteria for evaluating entrants into the United States” (The White House, 2017, para. 1). Since his inauguration, President Trump has signed more than 400 executive orders relating to migration in the US (Pierce & Bolter, 2020). Among his initiatives, in addition to ending chain migration, are reforms targeting border security, the settlement of refugees and asylum seekers, the judicial system, entry restrictions for citizens of Muslim majority countries, and other changes in the processing of visa applications (Pierce & Bolter, 2020). These reforms, along with the mass detention of Latin American asylum seekers at the US-Mexico border, illustrate the swift traction gained by nativist and insular governing in the US, particularly since 2016. Notably, the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency (ICE) “more than doubled” its noncriminal arrests of unauthorized immigrants under the Trump administration (p. 2).

However, it is since 9/11 that the country has experienced an increase in securitization, including the imprisonment of unauthorized migrants who are deemed a potential risk to national security, mass deportations, expansion of counterterrorism measures, and stringent rules and regulations for refugees, aspiring immigrants, and international visitors as set out in the *USA PATRIOT Act 2001* and the *Homeland Security Act 2002* (Larsen, 2008; United States, 2001). In general, US migration policy and public attitude has been largely predicated on protectionism for nearly two decades (Larsen, 2008).

The realities of migration in North America and Europe are complex. Further, they are simultaneously unique to each location and inexorably tied together by common sentiment that is often bolstered, reinforced, and sometimes created by the media narratives that inform common knowledge (see Ramasubramanian, 2007).

## **2.2. The Creation and Influence of News Media**

This section will discuss the mechanisms of news production, and the media's influential relationship with public knowledge and political will.

### **2.2.1. Content Selection and Framing**

The media, while dynamic and often entertaining, is nevertheless a business and must stay competitive and sell its product in order to survive (Morin, 2016; Peelo et al., 2004; Shultziner & Stukalin, 2019). The media relies on sensationalism to make itself marketable, and this can lead to disproportionate coverage of certain events and populations that are deemed newsworthy (Gemi et al., 2012). Editors make the ultimate decisions regarding which stories to pursue and report to the public (Buckler, 2015; Clayman & Reisner, 1998; Gruenewald et al., 2009; Peelo et al., 2004; Pritchard & Hughes, 1997; Shultziner & Stukalin, 2019), creating a form of bias before the news has even reached consumers. Moreover, in parsing out the specific newsworthy or 'sensational' elements of a selected event, a degree of creative license is exercised in how the story is told, leading to a somewhat subjective interpretation of the original occurrence (Carter, 2013). It is in this way that the media can create 'reality' and public knowledge.

The media utilizes specific methods to package and present its stories in order to maximize a positive reception from readers. News outlets employ various frames to situate their stories within contexts that are familiar to consumers, thereby contributing "significantly to the creation and perpetuation of such meta-narratives" (Morin, 2016, pp. 989, 1001). Within media coverage, migrants are commonly framed as threats (physical, cultural, and economic) to receiving societies (Eberl et al., 2018; Fleras, 2015; Lawlor, 2015) while there exists comparatively limited coverage of the economic or cultural benefits of migration (Berry et al., 2015). As noted by Lawlor (2015):

The effects of these frames... is to create a series of dramatic narratives that emphasize episodic events, such as an attempt at fraud or an illegal border crossing, and de-emphasizing a constructive debate that would necessitate a more complete understanding of the policy context around immigration (p. 336).

An example of media framing in the context of crime and migration can be illustrated by Morin's (2016) study on the differential newspaper coverage of near-identical military base mass shootings in the US in 2009 (Texas) and 2013 (Washington): Both lone shooters were either current or recent military personnel who fatally shot 13 and 12 people, respectively. Morin identifies trends in coverage whereby "if perpetrators are immigrants, or from what is considered to be foreign racial or ethnic origins... the media tend to disregard their citizenship status, resort to negative stereotypes, conflate racial/ethnic/religious identity with foreignness, and represent them as permanent foreigners" (p. 992). This study demonstrates that the Texas shooter's nexus with migration was emphasized, despite the fact that he was actually born in the US (to immigrant parents); meanwhile, the Washington shooter's historical origins were not raised. Several other differences between the Texas shooter and the Washington shooter emerged in the news coverage through dichotomies discussing, respectively, (a) terrorism versus mental illness as the underlying cause of the event, (b) a longer story line detailing in-depth personal characteristics and past history versus a shorter, event-focused story line, (c) national versus local implications of the event, and (d) presentations of the victims as heroic versus simply the unfortunate targets of an exceptional crime (pp. 992-993, 1000). These findings illustrate an emphasis by the media on an implied inherent connection between migration and crime – a frame that is all too commonly employed in representations of migration (Berry et al., 2015; Christoph, 2012; Lawlor, 2015; Tong & Zuo, 2019).

### **2.2.2. The Symbiosis of Media, Public Perception, and Policy**

Numerous studies have recognized the "multi-directional" relationship between media coverage/representations, public perception of an issue, and the development and implementation of law and policy (Lawlor, 2015, p. 330; see also Chan, 2013; Esses et al., 2013; Fleras, 2015; Gemi et al., 2012; Hoewe, 2018; Hopkins, 2010; Jones, 2016; Krishnamurti, 2013; Morin, 2016; Mulvey, 2010; Reitmanova et al., 2015; Sohoni & Sohoni, 2014). The interrelationship of these spheres has tangible implications for migrant populations.

A Dutch study in the early 2000s determined that "immigration discourse in parliament and the news media was highly interrelated" and that by including political rhetoric in news stories, the media creates the "perpetuation of prejudicial framing

[making] it important to consider the discourse on ethnic minorities in the political arena” (Campbell, 2017, p. 263). In other words, political narratives are highly influential and shape marketable news content about vulnerable groups in society, such as migrants. Public perception and opinion are in turn heavily influenced by the media (de Vreese et al., 2011). Further, research indicates that “negative information has a stronger impact on citizens’ attitudes than positive information” (p. 183), indicating the particularly formative effect of negative media on public perception. Finally, the mechanisms of politics necessitate appealing to public sentiment; therefore, when the public holds a negative opinion on an issue, such as migration, and desires action to address the perceived problem, this incentivizes government to capitalize on the public’s concern and act accordingly (see Watson & Riffe, 2013). In essence, in the context of migration, the media, the public, and the government create a figurative mobius strip wherein migration is cyclically problematized and reacted to as it becomes a more and more salient issue.

In light of this reciprocal relationship, the implied association between migration and crime raises numerous concerns regarding the perpetuation of harmful misconceptions, particularly as “[c]rime news has long been understood to have a profound influence in moving society toward ‘law and order’ campaigns” (Dowler et al., 2006, p.841). Sohoni and Sohoni (2014) state that a ‘hyperawareness’ of a subject’s migration status occurs in the media discussion of crime due to the habitual reporting of this particular characteristic. However, conversely, the authors state that in the absence of this information, readers may make assumptions in an attempt to ‘fill in the blanks’ (p. 60). In this way, the media may well have established an environment whereby reporting *or not* reporting the migration status of an individual perpetuates a preoccupation with this information and the fortification of stereotypes and false associations. Many studies have demonstrated this outcome, showing that migrants are “routinely stereotyped as criminals, cheaters, and scapegoats, often within contexts of moral panic” and racism (Fleras, 2015, p. 277; Mahtani, 2001). The tendency for migrants to make headlines when the news is negative (Esses et al., 2013; Fleras, 2015; Gemi et al., 2012; Mahtani, 2001; Pettigrew et al., 2007) is problematic as such representation can “rapidly degrade” existing positive attitudes (Esses et al., 2013, p. 521). Because the media is often the only link many people have with migrant populations (Fleras, 2015; Hoewe, 2018;



Hopkins, 2010), whatever rhetoric is employed by news producing entities is therefore implicated in the public's internalization of this 'knowledge' (Hoewe, 2018).

The media exacerbates the crisis narrative of migration by discussing migration alongside general issues of criminality and other types of deviance, creating a “symbiotic relationship between government policy and policy-making style and an anti-immigration public, aided by a hostile media discourse” (Mulvey, 2010, p. 438; see also Krishnamurti, 2013). Several studies have highlighted the poor differentiation of criminality and migration in the media. Unauthorized border crossing or undocumented habitation in a country is commonly conflated with the commission of crime more generally, serving to label certain migrants as ‘criminal’ based on mode of arrival or the lapse of a visa (Hoewe, 2018; Krishnamurti, 2013; Sohoni & Sohoni, 2014). Reinforcing an association between migrants and crime is deeply damaging as migrant populations already work against “the perception that any crime committed by [migrants] is *extraneous* crime, or crime that would not have occurred were immigration restrictions stricter or more strictly enforced” (Sohoni & Sohoni, 2014, p. 58, emphasis in original).

As Fleras (2015) states, “the real issue is not media coverage per se... [it is] the public perceptions and political reactions that are derived from ‘mediatizing’ migrants that causes the harms to these populations (p. 310). However, other scholars suggest that the media do need to accept more responsibility and accountability for the content of their stories and the impact these stories have on the lived experiences of marginalized populations (CCME & WACC Europe, 2017; Christoph, 2012; Hoewe, 2018).

### **2.3. The Increasing Criminalization of Migration**

An example of the above-mentioned real-life impacts for migrant populations can be illustrated by an explanation of the blending of criminalization and migration.

It is first necessary to momentarily address the specifics of refugee law, in order to better understand some of the impetus for modern restrictions and the penalization of migration, broadly defined, within global north countries. In theory, Canada, the UK, and the US base their refugee law on the UN's 1951 *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees* and the 1967 *Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees* (although the US is a signatory only to the latter) (Fournier-Ruggles, 2016; UNHCR, 2015). The

aforementioned *Convention* provides the legal structure for the office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and was initially mandated to address flight and refuge as a temporary issue following the Second World War (Fournier-Ruggles, 2016). As Betts and Collier (2017) suggest, the ongoing need for international structure and guidance surrounding asylum seekers, and other categories of migrants, has far outlived the parameters originally set by the UN; The existing schemes and procedures simply cannot contend with modern migration realities. Further, the international policymaking pace on issues of migration has been described as tortuously slow and piecemeal, resulting in an inability to adequately address current needs and thus culminating in the conflation of multiple categories of migrants and the subsequent restriction of all types of migration (Betts & Collier, 2017, Crisp, 2017; Mulvey, 2010). Such strain is leading to the increasing use of criminal law to address migration. Stumpf (2006) defines this phenomenon as occurring when

- (1) the substance of immigration law and criminal law increasingly overlaps,
- (2) immigration enforcement has come to resemble criminal law enforcement, and
- (3) the procedural aspects of prosecuting immigration violations have taken on many of the earmarks of criminal procedure (p. 381).

An example of overlapping criminal and immigration law can be illustrated by the Supreme Court of Canada (SCC) case *R v Wong*. In *Wong* (2018), a permanent resident was faced with deportation following conviction for a single count of trafficking in cocaine (para. 42). Because the court imposed a sentence of greater than six months, Wong was automatically subject to a removal order without the right to appeal, as set out in Canada's *IRPA* (paras. 50-52). This is a simple demonstration of the severe repercussions, relative to those for citizens, faced by migrants who find themselves before the courts. The triggering of deportation by a mere six-month sentence for a non-violent offence, and the inability to appeal the subsequent removal order, speaks to a low level of tolerance, a precedence for harsh punitive measures, and possibly a ready-made association between migrants and the risk of serious criminality.

Another "hybridization" of migration and crime (Garner, 2015, p. 200) can be illustrated by the widespread use of migration detention. Often defined as "a form of administrative confinement" serving an "immigration-related goal", migration detention is a practice that is carried out in all three countries considered in this study (Sampson & Mitchell, 2013, p. 99; see also Dauvergne, 2008, Fisk, 2016; Global Detention Project,

2020). Sampson and Mitchell (2013) state that detention is most typically used pre-deportation and includes the confinement of lawful residents who have “lost a valid status due to committing an unrelated criminal offence” (p. 99), such as in *Wong*. However, detention may also be used as a general screening tool and can include “unauthorized migrants, stateless persons, victims of human trafficking and UNHCR-recognized refugees” (p. 100). Such use of detention has led scholars to question migration’s growing role as “a cornerstone of the carceral state” (Hester, 2015, p. 141).

Additional intersections of migration and criminalization can be seen in the social stigmatization of Muslims and their association with extremism and violence (Christoph, 2012; Hoewe & Bowe, 2018), the lack of migrant self-representation in the media and its effect on the public debate (CCME & WACC Europe, 2017), and the struggles of the scientific community to break through the wall of general knowledge and impart the message that migration is not empirically linked to an increase in crime (Ignatans & Roebuck, 2018; Kremer et al., 2019; Light & Miller, 2018; Plecas et al., 1996; Reitmanova et al., 2015; Sohoni & Sohoni, 2014).

## **2.4. Aim of the Current Study**

The overarching aim of this research is to assess news media presentation of migrant crime through the examination of newspaper article content. The specific goal of this study is twofold: to assess whether the inclusion or exclusion of various story elements and article characteristics impacts news media representation of migration, and to look more closely at the framing and context of specific types of migration discussion in newspaper articles. These goals are pursued through both quantitative and qualitative analysis of the data.

Concern for media representation is apt as the world is currently seeing unprecedented levels of interconnectivity and information sharing along with rising migration and a resurgence of xenophobic nationalism (Akkerman, 2018; Amaya, 2018; Castles, 2018; Wright, 2009). Moreover, abundant research demonstrates the continued existence of media biases and their impacts on public perception and political action (Domke et al., 1999; Ramasubramanian, 2007; Chavez et al., 2010; Eberl et al., 2018). These biases highlight the importance of news media as a vector of information and source of influence in society and raise questions about the fair representation of

migrants in the news and the potential repercussions of a lack of such representation. The specific mechanisms behind news production and consumer impact are numerous and exceed the scope of the current study; however, they are crucial considerations within a broader need for increased media accountability and proactivity in the realm of migrant representation (Christoph, 2012; Hoewe, 2018). Biased depictions of migration in the context of crime may contribute to the processes involved in latent and, increasingly, active prejudice.

Because the news media process is cyclical in nature (Chan, 2013; Esses et al., 2013; Fleras, 2015; Gemi et al., 2012; Hoewe, 2018; Hopkins, 2010; Jones, 2016; Krishnamurti, 2013; Morin, 2016; Mulvey, 2010; Reitmanova et al., 2015; Sohoni & Sohoni, 2014), what is present in current articles may not only be a reflection of existing attitudes and biases but also a sustaining or stimulating force for those attitudes and biases into the future. For example, a report commissioned by the UNHCR states that “it is impossible to ignore the role of the mass media in influencing public and elite political attitudes towards asylum and migration” and that “[p]ublic attitudes towards immigration are both *reflected in and influenced by news*” (Berry et al., 2015, pp. 5, 14, emphasis added). Thus, it is pertinent to maintain an ongoing understanding of the present state of migrant media representation in order to identify aspects that may be implicated in sociopolitical issues grounded in or exacerbated by media exposure.

## **Chapter 3. Research Methods**

### **3.1. Overall Analytic Approach**

This study utilizes a mixed-methods approach. Combining quantitative and qualitative approaches broadens the scope of the research and enables a detailed and nuanced media content analysis: Macnamara (2010) illustrates the benefits of an integrated approach by pointing out the shortcomings of a reliance on frequencies at the expense of the context within which these quantitative features exist. A quantitative approach may increase the validity and replicability of data while a qualitative approach extends interpretation beyond mere manifest content – identifiable pieces of text that recur throughout a sample; Together, the two approaches provide the “best of both worlds”, fostering a more comprehensive understanding of the results (Macnamara, 2010, p. 6; see also Splichal & Dahlgren, 2014; White & Marsh, 2006). Applying both methods brings manifold strengths to the research while mitigating some of the common concerns around each method’s inherent limitations.

The following section details the sample selection procedure for the overall study. Next, quantitative analyses are addressed in chapter 4 and qualitative analyses in chapter 5. Overall conclusions, limitations, and future directions are presented together in chapter 6.

### **3.2. Sample and Article Selection**

In order to generate a broader scope and provide a platform for comparisons, articles were gathered from three distinct locations: Canada, the UK, and the US. These countries represent three global north Western democracies with many commonalities in language, history, political structure, culture, and legal systems. However, such commonalities are not absolute, and the countries vary in their national attitudes as well as their geographic relationships with migration. Articles were gathered from a total of six newspapers – two per sample country – and selection of these newspapers was based on a combination of their circulation, political bias, and the robusticity of the journalism (i.e., reputable broadsheet publications). These criteria were used to guide selection in order to ensure as much comparability as possible between the countries’ reporting.

Prioritizing similar circulation rates helps to identify news of a similar reach within each population; seeking similar political biases ensures that no newspaper is reporting from a vastly different perspective and thus potentially distorting the results; likewise, seeking reputable newspapers that report in a professional manner allows the sample to be more uniform in the type and quality of its publications.

In Canada, *The Globe and Mail* was ranked as the most widely circulated daily newspaper at 323,133 copies per day (excluding Sundays) and the *Toronto Star* was ranked the second most widely circulated daily newspaper at 308,881 copies per day (World Atlas, 2017a). In the US, *USA Today* was ranked the most widely circulated newspaper at approximately 328,845 copies daily and *The New York Times* was ranked the second most widely circulated newspaper at approximately 300,230 copies daily (World Atlas, 2017b).

Owing to the substantial tabloid culture in the UK (Boykoff, 2008; Chadwick et al., 2018) a slightly different approach was taken in selecting the UK sample newspapers. The top two most widely circulated UK newspapers are tabloids, which differ from the type of journalism offered by the Canadian and US selections. To mitigate this issue of comparability, broadsheet newspapers with similar circulation rates to the North American papers were sought and selected. *The Times* is reported as circulating between 428,034 and 440,558 copies and *The Guardian* is reported as circulating 138,082 copies; no specification is made as to daily or weekly circulation, but one can assume these figures represent a daily total based on similar numbers from other countries (Statista, 2018; Newsworks, 2015; World Atlas, 2018).

Table 1 summarizes the above characteristics.

**Table 1. Sample newspapers and circulation**

Newspaper	Circulation (approximate copies daily)
<b>Canada</b>	
<i>The Globe and Mail</i>	323,133
<i>The Toronto Star</i>	308,881
<b>US</b>	
<i>USA Today</i>	328,845
<i>The New York Times</i>	300,230
<b>UK</b>	
<i>The Times</i>	434,296 <sup>†</sup>
<i>The Guardian</i>	138,082

<sup>†</sup> Average based on the range of copies given.

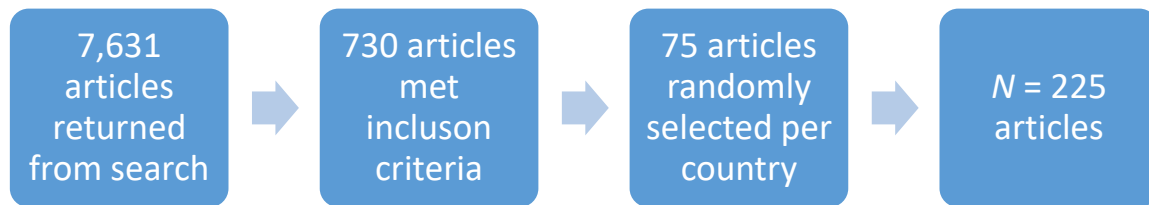
All articles were gathered from the Factiva newspaper database using a Boolean keyword search to identify articles discussing both crime and migration. The two constructs and associated search parameters, as well as exclusion terms, are shown in Table 2:

**Table 2. Search terms**

Constructs	Search Terms
<b>Construct 1: Migration</b>	(migra* OR immigra* OR refugee* OR asylum OR “asylum seeker” OR “person* in need of protection” OR alien* OR deportable*)
<b>Construct 2: Crime</b>	AND (crim* OR violen* OR homicide* OR murder* OR death* OR theft* OR vandalism* OR gang* OR terror* OR drug* OR traffic* OR “cyber crim*” OR deport* OR detention* OR arrest* OR assault* OR charge* OR prison* OR jail* OR incarcerate* OR rape* OR rapist* OR offend* OR offence* OR offense*)
<b>Exclusion Terms</b>	NOT (TIFF OR “book review” OR “film review” OR birds OR whales)

The process by which the final sample was created is illustrated in Figure 1:

**Figure 1. Sampling process**



A total of 7,631 articles published between January 1 and December 31, 2018 were returned from Factiva. Of this initial number, 730 articles met the inclusion criteria for the study. From these 730 articles, a stratified random sample of 75 articles per country was assembled for an analysis sample of 225 articles. The use of a stratified random sample both encapsulates the total sample while providing a workable number of articles for coding and analysis.

### 3.2.1. Inclusion Criteria

Articles included in the sample meet the following criteria:

1. The article reports on some type of crime<sup>2</sup>.
  - i. The crime in question is verified, speculative, or hypothetical in nature and may include discussion on opposing sides of an issue (e.g., an article stating migrants are criminogenic as well as an article stating that migration decreases crime).
2. The crime is discussed as being migrant-perpetrated.
  - i. The crime in question is committed within or outside the borders of the reporting country, and it is committed by someone holding a migrant status at the time of the offence or by someone who obtained a migrant status following the commission of the offence.
    - a. Naturalized citizens are considered to hold a migration status as the mention of naturalized citizenship emphasizes foreign origins and the nexus with migration.

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<sup>2</sup> Defined as codified or common law criminal offences at the domestic/national level of the country in question (reporting country and/or subject of the article); as opposed to immigration infractions such as visa misrepresentation, overstaying a visa, entry without documentation, etc.



- b. Articles concerning second- or third- (etc.) generation citizens are included if the individual's family origin is highlighted.
- 3. The article specifically mentions migration or migration status.
  - i. Mentions of ethnic or religious background alone are insufficient to establish a reference to migration.

### **3.2.2. Exclusion Criteria**

Articles with the following characteristics were excluded from the sample:

1. Articles reporting solely on migration infractions and offences.
  - i. Including the recently criminalized border crossing in the US, as well as articles discussing deportations and migration detention where no causal criminal event was mentioned as a precursor.
2. Reporting on human trafficking or human smuggling, unless the facilitators are non-citizen residents of the country under discussion.
3. Articles reporting on crime committed by a tourist, or other similar category of person not residing, either permanently or temporarily (e.g., for work or school), in the country under discussion.
4. Articles where a connection to migration may be known only if the reader has sufficient background knowledge of/exposure to the subject, event, or circumstance (i.e., the article contains no explicit reference to migration).
5. Articles that focus solely on issues of crime under international law (e.g., war crimes; crimes against humanity).
6. Birth/death announcements and obituaries.
7. Fictional/entertainment-based accounts of an event.
  - i. Including book, film, tv, theatre, and music reviews as well as documentaries.

## Chapter 4. Hypothetical Discussion and Article Prominence

### 4.1. Research Questions

Following quantitative coding (discussed next), research questions were developed regarding the representation of migrant crime, informed by the data at hand and guided by the literature. The following research questions were developed to be “open-minded and speculative”, more focused on exploring the data and generating hypotheses than producing confirmatory analyses (Goeman & Solari, 2011). Preliminary and iterative exposure to the sample of news articles in the current study revealed several points of interest that shaped the lines of inquiry in this research. Immediately obvious was the diffuse employment of generalizations and speculation about migrant crime, prompting an interest in the role of hypotheticals, as opposed to actual crime events, in reporting on migration and crime. Articles also varied greatly in length, raising questions regarding how particular story elements relate to word count.

To assess how newspapers are representing migration, the following research questions (RQs) were developed:

1. *Which elements or characteristics of a newspaper article containing migrant crime are predictive of the hypothetical discussion of migrant crime?*

This question assesses whether the reporting country, any particular article content (e.g., mention of migrant race; Islam; violence), or any particular article characteristic (e.g., crime or migration in the headline) makes it more or less likely that an article will involve hypothetical discussion of migration and the commission of crime. Hypothetical discussion includes theoretical, speculative, or proposed risks related to migration and crime. Hypothetical discussion of migrant crime can be thought of as assumptions or suggestions linking migrants or migration with a risk of crime, often expressed as a general fear of migrant crime.

2. *Which elements or characteristics of a newspaper article containing migrant crime are predictive of greater article prominence (operationalized as word count)?*

This question assesses whether the reporting country or any particular type of article content or characteristic influences the length of articles on migration and crime. Increased article length can both signify an important story, attracting readers, and provide an extended narrative on the content (Burns & Crawford, 1999; Chermak & Chapman, 2007).

## 4.2. Coding

An iterative process was employed to develop the coding for this study. To begin, a preliminary reading of the full sample ( $n = 225$ ) was conducted to generate an overview of the articles and their content. Next, inductive, open coding was performed to identify the concepts of interest that would form the foundation for further examination. These concepts and associated variables were allowed to emerge from the data (Nowell et al., 2017; White & Marsh 2006), but were also informed by the literature on media representation, migration, and crime (Aubrun et al., 2005; Berry et al., 2015; Chavez et al., 2010; Eberl et al., 2018; Hoewe, 2018; OECD, 2014; Thompson, 2014). Recurring elements of interest in the articles were noted and used to generate a 55-item codebook, described in more detail below. The codebook was used to quantitatively code the articles for the presence or absence of variables relating to migration, crime, demographics, and country-specific ideas and institutions. The inductive development of the codebook allowed for the identification of features present in the sample and mitigated the risk of overlooking or failing to consider something of relevance (as may have occurred by employing a deductive approach).

Preliminary open coding led to the development of the codebook with variables representing key characteristics and concepts documented throughout the sample. Variables include newspaper article structural characteristics (word count; date of publication; page number), migrant demographic information (e.g., migration status in the headline; migrant race), crime information (e.g., crime in the headline; if the article's purpose is to report a crime), and various other information (e.g., if the article contains a direct quote from a migrant; if the article contains mention of migration detention; see Appendix A for the full codebook<sup>3</sup>). The presence or absence of variables in each article

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<sup>3</sup> Including 13 additional variables created after coding to consolidate/combine information for ease of analysis. These variables are indicated in the appendix by asterisks.

was coded in a binary fashion with “1” indicating the presence of a variable and “0” indicating its absence. A small number of variables were coded on a continuous scale or as a categorical measure (e.g., word count; the reporting countries and reporting newspapers). All coding was conducted in Microsoft Excel.

After completion of the quantitative coding, a second coder used a random number generator to select a stratified random sample of articles from each country, totalling 25% ( $n = 57$ ) of the total sample; the coder then conducted an additional round of coding on this sample as a reliability check. An inter-rater reliability assessment was performed in Stata IC 16.0 and a Krippendorff's alpha coefficient of .79 was established. The stated ideal coefficient for this metric is .80 or above, with coefficients at or above .667 considered sufficient for tentative conclusions (Krippendorff, 2004). This finding indicates that the quantitative coding herein produced sufficiently consistent data to be reliable in descriptive and inferential statistical models.

## 4.3. Variables

### 4.3.1. Dependent Variables

Two dependent variables of interest are explored quantitatively in this study:

1. Does the article contain hypothetical discussion of migrant crime?  
(yes/no)
2. Article prominence – word count (continuous)

### ***Hypothetical Discussion***

The Oxford English Dictionary defines ‘hypothetical’ as something “[i]nvolving or of the nature of hypothesis; conjectural”; an additional definition lists the synonym “conditional” (OED, 2020). This study identifies articles that report beyond *actual* criminal incidences perpetrated by migrants and extend into a generalized discussion of information that is not verified, not empirically supported, and/or established via specious circumstances. For example, some news articles begin by reporting on an actual crime committed by a migrant individual but proceed to discuss generalized threats posed by any/all migration. Some articles contain an assumption that a crime has been committed by a migrant, absent any evidence. Still others contain *only* generalized, hypothetical conversation about the risks of migration and crime. Such discussion illustrates a logical

error termed ‘the exception fallacy’: a generalization from “individual to group-level characteristics... which informs much stereotyping” (Miller & Brewer, 2003, p. 84).

Ramasubramanian (2007) discusses media-based strategies for stereotype reduction, detailing how “research studies show that explicit instructions from experts to negate stereotypes can have a positive influence on reducing stereotyping effects” (p. 252). Similarly, including “[c]ounter-stereotypical exemplars [in media] appear to have an impact... on stereotype reduction” (p. 253). It should be noted that many articles in this study quote or paraphrase ideas expressed by certain individuals or organizations, and therefore the stereotypical content is not necessarily expressed as the position taken by the newspaper or journalist (see Berry et al., 2015). Because so much of the negative narrative around migrant crime stems from third parties, explicitly instructing readers to be mindful of, and ideally disregard, stereotypical rhetoric and hypothetical narratives may be useful; additionally, ensuring adequate context and the inclusion of counter-rhetoric and counter-narratives in the media may serve as a method to dilute the impact of stereotypical portrayals in the news (CCME & WACC Europe, 2017; Ramasubramanian, 2007).

Among the abundant literature on media framing and migrant criminal threat (Berry et al., 2015; Carter, 2013; Chavez et al., 2010; Flores & Schachter, 2019; Lawlor, 2015) it appears few criminological studies directly address hypothetical discussion and its occurrence within reporting on migrant crime risk. It is useful to acknowledge and distinguish news media discussion as being hypothetical as this makes clear the nature of the content and demonstrates that what is being discussed is abstract, rather than grounded in reality or empirical evidence. Explicitly distinguishing hypothetical discussion in the news should immediately signal that the content is not limited to verified information or facts and would ideally prime readers to think more critically about the information being conveyed, similar to Ramasubramanian’s (2007) strategies for stereotype reduction. Exploring the nature of hypothetical discussion of migrant crime is a necessary preceding step to an identification of problem areas in the media narrative and an application of stereotype reduction measures that may ultimately help to alleviate unconscious bias toward migrant populations.

A second study, on race-based risk estimation (Quillian & Pager, 2010), briefly mentions assessing perceived risk of crime through the use of hypothetical scenarios.

The authors explain a process called ‘stereotype amplification’ that involves (a) forming an understanding of particular groups based on existing stereotypes, (b) the visibility of these stereotyped groups in the context of a risk setting (e.g., crime), and (c) a low direct knowledge of this risk setting (Quillian & Pager, 2010). Because migrants are a historically stereotyped group, particularly racialized migrants, the reporting of migration in the context of crime thus links existing stereotypes to a salient risk setting. Further, “most [public] knowledge of crime comes from sources other than personal experience, most notably the mass media” (p. 100). In essence, crime media and migration create the perfect milieu for the hypothetical discussion of a population that is personally foreign to most news consumers. As such, this study aims to explore any links between hypothetical discussion of migrant crime and particular article content or characteristics (e.g., mentions of race, migration status, violent crime, composition of headlines) in order to highlight the theoretical nature of these associations for targeting in future mitigation measures.

### ***Prominence***

Article prominence is the second of two typical measures of newsworthiness (the first being initial coverage – the decision by news producers to run a story in the first place) and details the importance a story is afforded once it has made its way to press (Feeley et al., 2016). Article prominence, operationalized in this study as word count, assesses whether articles are longer or shorter/contain more or fewer words. Existing studies have identified a higher word count as an indicator of greater article prominence (Chermak & Chapman, 2007; Feeley et al., 2016) and assert that prominent structural characteristics attract and influence newspaper readership (Burns & Crawford, 1999). Further, it is intuitive to assume that a longer story may contain a greater amount of relevant information (Guillaume & Bath, 2008). In this way, longer articles may attract readers with their magnitude as well as subsequently impart a more detailed narrative. Thus, vis-à-vis word count, this variable explores whether certain elements or characteristics present in an article affect its overall noteworthiness and potential impact.

### 4.3.2. Independent Variables

The following 16 independent variables, shown in Table 3, are used in both the analysis of hypothetical discussion<sup>4</sup> and article prominence:

1. Was the article written in Canada? (yes/no)
2. Was the article written in the UK? (yes/no)

Inter-country differences between Canadian, UK, and US reporting may illuminate important variation in the way migration and crime is presented in these regions. Comparing these countries is valuable as they are all prominent Western powers, democracies, and all are popular destinations for migrants (Fleras, 2015). Further, Canada, the UK, and the US share many general similarities, including English as an official language, a long history of migration, and Eurocentrism. Articles written in the US were used as the reference category.

3. Is migrant status mentioned in the article headline? (yes/no)
4. Is crime mentioned in the article headline? (yes/no)

Headlines advertise the content of a story and are meant to attract reader attention (Ng & Zhao, 2020). Additionally, “scary and exaggerated headlines alone can contribute to viewers getting a negative image of migrants and foreigners” (Christoph, 2012, p. 99). Whether migration status or a direct reference to crime in the headline of an article relates to hypothetical content or article prominence may help determine what one can expect from a story based on this ‘first impression’.

5. How many different migrant races are mentioned in the article? (0-5)
6. Does the article mention Islam or related terms (e.g., “Muslims”; “mosque”; “niqab”)? (yes/no)
7. Does the article include any terms for irregular migration (e.g., “illegal”; “undocumented”)? (yes/no)

The literature explains the well-established connection between media and racialized subjects – namely, that “minorities are overrepresented as offenders” in the

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<sup>4</sup> With one exception: variable 11 (negative statement) is not included in the analysis of hypothetical discussion as this variable was found to have perfect prediction in the model.

media – as well as the presence of increasingly conspicuous racism in society at large (Gruenewald et al., 2013, p. 757; see also Bobo, 2017; Virdee & McGeever, 2018). Whether the presence and number of racialized migrants in an article increases the likelihood of hypothetical discussion and/or article prominence is of interest in this study. Similarly, factoring into the media agenda, Islam (Hoewe & Bowe, 2018; Gunduz, 2010; Pratt, 2015) and irregular migration (Bloch & Chimienti, 2011) have become dominant social and political issues in Western countries since the early 2000s and Trump's presidential election, respectively (Gallup, n.d.).

8. Does the article mention violent crime? (yes/no)

9. Does the article mention property crime? (yes/no)

Violent crime has long been among the most sensational subjects in the media (Dowler, 2004) and an examination of its intersections with migration is pertinent. Violent crime is defined in this study as any case of homicide, sexual assault, assault, robbery, kidnapping, or terrorism. However, some suggest that any link between crime and migration is actually rooted in property crime (Spenkuch, 2014). Property crime is defined in this study as any case of burglary, theft, fraud, or vandalism.

10. Does the article include a positive statement about migration?  
(yes/no)

11. Does the article include a negative statement about migration<sup>5</sup>?  
(yes/no)

Given the inherently negative connotations of crime, it is valuable to examine the opposing perspective on migration, in the form of 'pro-migrant' discussion, and its effect on hypothetical discussion and article prominence. Likewise, measuring the impact of negative statements about migration on these measures may be illuminating. Positive or negative statements are defined here as any *generalized* positive (conferring a benefit) or negative (causing a detriment) statement about migration as a whole.

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<sup>5</sup> This quantitative variable was created from the qualitative analysis on negative discussion of migration and thus is not included in the calculation of the reliability coefficient for the quantitative data. However, the contents of this variable were reviewed as part of the qualitative reliability check and would be expected to raise the reliability coefficient of the quantitative data if included.



12. Does the article include a statement refuting migrant crime (e.g., stating that migration does *not* increase crime rates or that a migrant individual did *not* commit any crime)? (yes/no)

Assessing the impact of article statements countering the ‘migration causes crime’ narrative on the presence of hypothetical discussion and level of article prominence is important as it may illustrate the degree to which space is given to this counter-narrative. Such refuting statements (e.g., migration does not increase crime) should be distinguished from the above positive statements by the absence of a proposed benefit (e.g., that migration actually *decreases* crime rates).

13. Does the article contain a direct quote from a migrant? (yes/no)

Migrants are seldom given direct representation in media (CCME & WACC Europe, 2017). Therefore, it is important to assess instances where migrants themselves are given a voice in these stories and provided an opportunity to represent themselves and their experiences through direct quotation.

14. Does the article mention migration detention? (yes/no)

15. Does the article mention deportation? (yes/no)

Migration detention and deportation are often controversial and divisive mechanisms of sovereignty (Atak et al., 2018; Geddes, 2005; Global Detention Project, 2020; International Rescue Committee, 2019; The Migration Observatory, 2020), pitting rules and regulations against human rights. It is difficult to discuss migration and crime without raising the issues of detention and deportation, and thus these constructs are examined for their potential influence on hypothetical discussion and article prominence.

16. Is the article content US-focused (regardless of which country produced the article)? (yes/no)

Last, with so much global attention on the US and the Trump administration following the federal election in 2016, an assessment of how much content from each sample country focuses on events and issues in the US is necessary to note any significant influence on the other countries’ reporting.

**Table 3. Quantitative variables**

Research Question	Dependent Variable	Independent Variables (binary)
1. Which story elements of a newspaper article on migration and crime are predictive of the hypothetical discussion of migrant crime?	Hypothetical Discussion (binary)	1. Was the article written in Canada? 2. Was the article written in the UK? 3. Is migrant status mentioned in the article headline? 4. Is crime mentioned in the article headline? 5. How many different migrant races are mentioned in the article <sup>a</sup> ? 6. Does the article mention Islam? 7. Does the article include any terms for irregular migration? 8. Does the article mention violent crime? 9. Does the article mention property crime?
2. Which story elements of a newspaper article on migration and crime are predictive of greater article prominence (operationalized as word count)?	Word Count (continuous)	10. Does the article include a positive statement about migration? 11. Does the article include a negative statement about migration <sup>b</sup> ? 12. Does the article include a statement refuting migrant crime? 13. Does the article contain a direct quote from a migrant? 14. Does the article mention migration detention? 15. Does the article mention deportation? 16. Is the article content US-focused)?

<sup>a</sup> This variable value ranges from 0-5.

<sup>b</sup> Not included in the analysis of hypothetical discussion due to perfect prediction.

## 4.4. Analytics

The quantitative portion of this study examines the manifest content of the articles and assesses the presence/absence of various article elements and characteristics against hypothetical discussion of migrant crime and article prominence.

### 4.4.1. Which Elements or Characteristics of a Newspaper Article Containing Migrant Crime are Predictive of the Hypothetical Discussion of Migrant Crime?

The first analysis uses logistic regression implemented in Stata IC 16.0 to assess the predictability of hypothetical discussion of migrant crime in the articles. Logistic regression is used with a binary dependent variable and carries several assumptions for its successful application: independence of observations; proper model specification,

meaning no relevant independent variables are omitted and no irrelevant independent variables are included; no significant outliers or high leverage points, and no multicollinearity in the data (Long, 2008). Diagnostic tests were conducted on preliminary models, including model specification, collinearity, and goodness-of-fit. The final model contains 15 predictor variables.

#### **4.4.2. Which Elements or Characteristics of a Newspaper Article Containing Migrant Crime are Predictive of Greater Article Prominence (Operationalized as Word Count)?**

The second analysis uses ordinary least squares (OLS) regression implemented in Stata IC 16.0 to assess the predictability of article prominence vis-à-vis word count. As with logistic regression, OLS regression carries several assumptions: independence of residuals, proper model specification; a linear relationship between the dependent variable and independent variables; no significant outliers or high leverage points, no multicollinearity; normally distributed error terms; and homoscedastic error terms (Long, 2008). In line with the first analysis, diagnostic tests were conducted to examine residuals, normality, homoscedasticity, collinearity, and model specification. The final model contains 16 predictor variables.

### **4.5. Model Assumptions**

#### **4.5.1. Hypothetical Discussion**

The logistic regression model reported a squared linear predicted value of  $z = .54$ ,  $p = .59$ , indicating that the model was properly specified. No issues with multicollinearity in the data were identified ( $VIF = 1.33$ ) and goodness-of-fit criteria were met (Pearson  $\chi^2(174) = 172.60$ ,  $p = .52$ ). There were no problematic outliers and no missing cases in the analysis.

#### **4.5.2. Article Prominence (Word Count)**

Initial inspection of the data identified numerous outliers, a skewed distribution, and heteroscedasticity. Owing to large differences in length of the articles, it was difficult to mitigate these problems without sacrificing the range of the dependent variable. To

preserve as much of the data as possible, the dependent variable was logged and winsorized. Winsorization is a technique whereby outlying values are converted to the highest and/or lowest non-outlying value in the distribution (Reifman & Keyton, 2010). In comparison to trimming, winsorizing does not eliminate the outlying values and therefore retains valuable information about the number of cases at the high and low ends of the distribution (Reifman & Keyton, 2010), making it an arguably preferable method for dealing with outliers. The combination of logging and winsorizing allowed the data to form a normal distribution (Shapiro-Wilk  $z = -.59$ ,  $p = .72$ ) and successfully reduced outlying cases. Winsorization cut-points for the sample were set at the 7<sup>th</sup> and 93<sup>rd</sup> percentiles, resulting in 30 articles being winsorized on the dependent variable of word count, equalling 13.3% of the total sample. These cut-points represent the minimum threshold at which all but four residuals would fall into an acceptable range ( $<|2.5|$ ) while heteroscedasticity (Breusch-Pagan/Cook-Weisberg  $\chi^2(1) = .34$ ,  $p = .56$ ; Cameron and Trivedi (CT)  $\chi^2(136) = 132.41$ ,  $p = .57$ ), skewness (CT  $\chi^2(16) = 23.71$ ,  $p = .10$ ), kurtosis (CT  $\chi^2(1) = .51$ ,  $p = .48$ ), collinearity (VIF = 1.38, and model specification (squared linear predicted value  $t = -.77$ ,  $p = .44$ ; Ramsey  $f(3, 205) = .91$ ,  $p = .44$ ) returned acceptable values. The articles containing the remaining outlying residuals were thoroughly examined and ultimately retained in the sample as no errors or problematic patterns in coding were found that would suggest their removal was necessary. There were no missing cases in the analysis.

## 4.6. Results

### 4.6.1. Descriptives

Following are the descriptives for each dependent variable, including a breakdown by each of the three sample countries.

#### *Hypothetical Discussion*

Whether an article contains hypothetical discussion of migrant crime is represented by a binary variable that categorizes articles as containing no hypothetical discussion (0) or containing any hypothetical discussion (1).

Of the total sample, 152 articles (68%) contain at least some hypothetical discussion (“any hypothetical”). Illustrated in Table 4, articles containing hypothetical

discussion were in the majority within each sample country; between sample countries, the highest proportion of hypothetical discussion was found in the US (37%), followed by the UK (32%), and Canada (31%).

**Table 4. Hypothetical discussion of migrant crime by reporting country**

Country	Articles with no hypothetical ( <i>n</i> (%))	Articles with any hypothetical ( <i>n</i> (%))	Total
<b>Within-country</b>			
Canada	<i>n</i> = 28 (37%)	<i>n</i> = 47 (63%)	<i>n</i> = 75 (100%)
UK	<i>n</i> = 27 (36%)	<i>n</i> = 48 (64%)	<i>n</i> = 75 (100%)
US	<i>n</i> = 18 (24%)	<i>n</i> = 57 (76%)	<i>n</i> = 75 (100%)
Total	<i>n</i> = 73 (32%)	<i>n</i> = 152 (68%)	<i>n</i> = 225 (100%)
<b>Between-country</b>			
Canada	<i>n</i> = 28 (38%)	<i>n</i> = 47 (31%)	<i>n</i> = 75 (33%)
UK	<i>n</i> = 27 (37%)	<i>n</i> = 48 (32%)	<i>n</i> = 75 (33%)
US	<i>n</i> = 18 (25%)	<i>n</i> = 57 (37%)	<i>n</i> = 75 (33%)
Total	<i>n</i> = 73 (100%)	<i>n</i> = 152 (100%)	<i>n</i> = 225 (100%)
$\chi^2$ ( <i>p</i> )	3.69 (.158)	3.69 (.158)	

Note: Chi-square values represent the significance of between-country results for articles containing and not containing hypothetical discussion of migrant crime.

Contrary to initial hypotheses about the data, differences between the countries were not statistically significant at the bivariate level with regard to hypothetical discussion ( $\chi^2$  (2) = 3.69, *p* = .158).

### **Article Prominence**

Article prominence is ultimately represented by a logged and winsorized continuous variable measuring article word count. Prior to logging and winsorizing, the median article word count is 940 words and the mean article word count is 1208.3 words (std. dev. = 1466.12).

Table 5 illustrates the (pre logging and winsorizing<sup>6</sup>) median and mean word counts for each individual country. Also illustrated is the within-country split for articles

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<sup>6</sup> Used throughout the bivariate analyses.

below the median word count and at/above the median word count, as well as articles below the mean word count and at/above the mean word count. Here, it can be seen that only the US produced more articles at or above the median word count than below (68% versus 32%). Further shown in Table 5 is the between-country split, illustrating that the US had the single greatest proportion of articles at or above the median and mean word counts overall (68% and 41%).

**Table 5. Median and mean word count by reporting country**

Country	Median word count [range]			Mean word count [std. dev.]		
Canada	888 [175-4349]			1097 [781]		
UK	823 [68-17266]			1259 [2166]		
US	1068 [233-8534]			1269 [1088]		
Overall sample	940 [68-17266]			1208 [1466]		
	Median word count			Mean word count		
	Articles below ( <i>n</i> (%))	Articles at/above ( <i>n</i> (%))	Total ( <i>n</i> (%))	Articles below ( <i>n</i> (%))	Articles at/above ( <i>n</i> (%))	Total ( <i>n</i> (%))
Canada	<i>n</i> = 42 (56%)	<i>n</i> = 33 (44%)	<i>n</i> = 75 (100%)	<i>n</i> = 59 (79%)	<i>n</i> = 16 (21%)	<i>n</i> = 75 (100%)
UK	<i>n</i> = 46 (61%)	<i>n</i> = 29 (39%)	<i>n</i> = 75 (100%)	<i>n</i> = 58 (77%)	<i>n</i> = 17 (23%)	<i>n</i> = 75 (100%)
US	<i>n</i> = 24 (32%)	<i>n</i> = 51 (68%)	<i>n</i> = 75 (100%)	<i>n</i> = 44 (59%)	<i>n</i> = 31 (41%)	<i>n</i> = 75 (100%)
Total	<i>n</i> = 112 (50%)	<i>n</i> = 113 (50%)	<i>n</i> = 225 (100%)	<i>n</i> = 161 (72%)	<i>n</i> = 64 (28%)	<i>n</i> = 225 (100%)
$\chi^2$ ( <i>p</i> )	$\chi^2 = 14.65$ (.001)***	$\chi^2 = 14.65$ (.001)***		$\chi^2 = 9.21$ (.010)**	$\chi^2 = 9.21$ (.010)**	

\**p* < .05. \*\**p* < .01. \*\*\**p* < .001.

Note: Chi-square values represent the significance of the median and mean word count between sample countries.

Differences between countries were statistically significant at the bivariate level regarding article prominence (median =  $\chi^2$  (2) = 14.65, *p* = .001; mean =  $\chi^2$  (2) = 9.21, *p* = .010), indicating that the US produces significantly more longer articles containing topics of migration and crime than Canada or the UK. After the US, Canada has the most prominent articles by median, while the UK has the most prominent articles by mean.

## 4.6.2. Bivariate Analyses

Table 6 depicts the distributions of independent variables across the three countries. Irregular migration status and US-focused content were significantly different between countries, with US articles more likely to contain these variables.

**Table 6. Independent variable prevalence by reporting country**

IV	Canada		UK		US		$\chi^2$ (p)
	Present (n (%))	Absent (n (%))	Present (n (%))	Absent (n (%))	Present (n (%))	Absent (n (%))	
Migration status in headline	n = 32 (43%)	n = 43 (57%)	n = 28 (37%)	n = 47 (63%)	n = 33 (44%)	n = 42 (56%)	0.77 (.681)
Crime in headline	n = 18 (24%)	n = 57 (76%)	n = 21 (28%)	n = 54 (72%)	n = 13 (17%)	n = 62 (83%)	2.45 (.294)
Number of migrant races <sup>a</sup>	Present n = 25 (33%) n = 38 (51%) n = 8 (11%) n = 1 (1%) n = 0 (0%) n = 3 (4%)		Present n = 25 (33%) n = 45 (60%) n = 3 (4%) n = 2 (3%) n = 0 (0%) n = 0 (0%)		Present n = 31 (41%) n = 35 (47%) n = 4 (5%) n = 2 (3%) n = 1 (1%) n = 2 (3%)		1.24 (.537)
Islam	n = 12 (16%)	n = 63 (84%)	n = 15 (20%)	n = 60 (80%)	n = 10 (13%)	n = 65 (87%)	1.23 (.541)
Irregular migration status	n = 31 (41%)	n = 44 (59%)	n = 27 (36%)	n = 48 (64%)	n = 49 (65%)	n = 26 (35%)	14.7 (.001)***
Violent crime	n = 45 (60%)	n = 30 (40%)	n = 43 (57%)	n = 32 (43%)	n = 40 (53%)	n = 35 (47%)	0.69 (.709)
Property crime	n = 12 (16%)	n = 63 (84%)	n = 8 (11%)	n = 67 (89%)	n = 7 (9%)	n = 68 (91%)	1.77 (.413)
Positive discussion	n = 6 (8%)	n = 69 (92%)	n = 3 (4%)	n = 72 (96%)	n = 8 (11%)	n = 67 (89%)	2.42 (.298)
Negative discussion	n = 34 (45%)	n = 41 (55%)	n = 30 (40%)	n = 45 (60%)	n = 42 (56%)	n = 33 (44%)	4.00 (.136)
Statement refuting migrant crime	n = 20 (27%)	n = 55 (73%)	n = 15 (20%)	n = 60 (80%)	n = 19 (25%)	n = 56 (75%)	1.02 (.599)
Migrant quote	n = 14 (19%)	n = 61 (81%)	n = 10 (13%)	n = 65 (87%)	n = 13 (17%)	n = 62 (83%)	0.84 (.657)
Detention	n = 26 (35%)	n = 49 (65%)	n = 24 (32%)	n = 51 (68%)	n = 18 (24%)	n = 57 (76%)	2.19 (.334)
Deportation	n = 33 (44%)	n = 42 (56%)	n = 26 (35%)	n = 49 (65%)	n = 35 (47%)	n = 40 (53%)	2.45 (.294)
US-focused content	n = 33 (44%)	n = 42 (56%)	n = 32 (43%)	n = 43 (57%)	n = 65 (87%)	n = 10 (13%)	38.5 (.000)***

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ ; <sup>a</sup> This variable ranges from 0-5 and was measured using a Kruskal Wallis test, with ties.

Tables 7 displays the bivariate relationships between the independent variables and hypothetical discussion of migrant crime using a chi-square test. Seven variables were significant at the bivariate level: mention of crime in the article headline, irregular migration status, violent crime, a statement refuting migrant crime, use of a migrant quote, mention of migration detention, and US-focused content. As a reminder, in Table 7, 'no hypothetical' represents articles that contain discussion of *only* real crime; 'any hypothetical' represents articles containing either hypothetical discussion *and* real crime discussion, or solely hypothetical discussion.

**Table 7. Presence of independent variables in articles with or without hypothetical discussion**

DV = Hypothetical discussion of migrant crime	No hypothetical (n (%))	Any hypothetical (n (%))	Total (n (%))	$\chi^2$ (p)
Canadian article	n = 28 (37%)	n = 47 (63%)	n = 75 (100%)	1.23 (.268)
UK article	n = 27 (36%)	n = 48 (64%)	n = 75 (100%)	0.65 (.421)
US article	n = 18 (24%)	n = 57 (76%)	n = 75 (100%)	3.66 (.056)
Migration status in headline	n = 29 (31%)	n = 64 (69%)	n = 93 (100%)	0.12 (.734)
Crime in headline	n = 28 (54%)	n = 24 (46%)	n = 52 (100%)	14.1 (.000)***
Number of migrant races <sup>a</sup>	n = 73 (32%)	n = 152 (68%)		
0	n = 20 (25%)	n = 61 (75%)		
1	n = 48 (41%)	n = 70 (59%)		
2	n = 3 (20%)	n = 12 (80%)		
3	n = 2 (40%)	n = 3 (60%)		
4	n = 0 (0%)	n = 1 (100%)		
5	n = 0 (0%)	n = 5 (100%)		0.81 (.368)
Islam	n = 5 (14%)	n = 32 (86%)	n = 37 (100%)	7.24 (.007)
Irregular migration status	n = 23 (22%)	n = 84 (79%)	n = 107 (100%)	11.2 (.001)***
Violent crime	n = 30 (23%)	n = 98 (77%)	n = 128 (100%)	11.0 (.001)***
Property crime	n = 13 (48%)	n = 14 (52%)	n = 27 (100%)	3.45 (.063)
Positive discussion	n = 2 (12%)	n = 15 (88%)	n = 17 (100%)	3.59 (.058)
Statement refuting migrant crime	n = 25 (46%)	n = 29 (54%)	n = 54 (100%)	6.22 (.013)*
Migrant quote	n = 20 (54%)	n = 17 (46%)	n = 37 (100%)	9.43 (.002)**
Detention	n = 32 (47%)	n = 36 (53%)	n = 68 (100%)	9.50 (.002)**
Deportation	n = 33 (35%)	n = 61 (65%)	n = 94 (100%)	0.52 (.470)
US-focused content	n = 32 (25%)	n = 98 (75%)	n = 130 (100%)	8.61 (.003)**

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

<sup>a</sup> This variable ranges from 0-5 and was measured using a Kruskal Wallis test, with ties.



Table 8 displays the bivariate relationships between independent variables and article prominence (word count) using a chi-square test. Eight variables were significant at the bivariate level: articles from the UK or the US, mention of crime in the article headline, irregular migration status, positive discussion of migration, use of a migrant quote, mention of deportation, and US-focused content. The median was chosen over the mean for bivariate analyses to better account for the presence of articles with exceptionally high and low word counts.

**Table 8. Presence of independent variables by median word count**

DV = Article prominence (word count)	Below median (n (%))	At/above median (n (%))	Total (n (%))	$\chi^2$ (p)
Canadian article	n = 42 (56%)	n = 33 (44%)	n = 75 (100%)	1.74 (.187)
UK article	n = 46 (61%)	n = 29 (39%)	n = 75 (100%)	6.01 (.014)*
US article	n = 24 (32%)	n = 51 (68%)	n = 75 (100%)	14.2 (.000)***
Migration status in headline	n = 45 (48%)	n = 48 (52%)	n = 93 (100%)	0.12 (.726)
Crime in headline	n = 39 (75%)	n = 13 (25%)	n = 52 (100%)	17.2 (.000)***
Number of migrant races <sup>a</sup>	n = 112 (50%)	n = 113 (50%)		
0	n = 46 (57%)	n = 35 (43%)		
1	n = 56 (47%)	n = 62 (53%)		
2	n = 8 (53%)	n = 7 (47%)		
3	n = 2 (40%)	n = 3 (60%)		
4	n = 0 (0%)	n = 1 (100%)		
5	n = 0 (0%)	n = 5 (100%)		3.42 (.064)
Islam	n = 19 (51%)	n = 18 (49%)	n = 37 (100%)	0.04 (.834)
Irregular migration status	n = 43 (40%)	n = 64 (60%)	n = 107 (100%)	7.51 (.006)**
Violent crime	n = 70 (55%)	n = 58 (45%)	n = 128 (100%)	2.86 (.091)
Property crime	n = 10 (37%)	n = 17 (63%)	n = 27 (100%)	1.99 (.158)
Positive discussion	n = 3 (18%)	n = 14 (82%)	n = 17 (100%)	7.59 (.006)**
Negative discussion	n = 48 (45%)	n = 58 (55%)	n = 106 (100%)	1.62 (.203)
Statement refuting migrant crime	n = 21 (39%)	n = 33 (61%)	n = 54 (100%)	3.37 (.066)
Migrant quote	n = 10 (27%)	n = 27 (73%)	n = 37 (100%)	9.17 (.002)**
Detention	n = 31 (46%)	n = 37 (54%)	n = 68 (100%)	0.68 (.408)
Deportation	n = 38 (40%)	n = 56 (60%)	n = 94 (100%)	5.65 (.017)*
US-focused content	n = 50 (38%)	n = 80 (62%)	n = 130 (100%)	15.8 (.000)***

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

<sup>a</sup> This variable ranges from 0-5 and was measured using a Kruskal Wallis test, with ties.

#### 4.6.3. Which Elements or Characteristics of a Newspaper Article Containing Migrant Crime are Predictive of the Hypothetical Discussion of Migrant Crime?

The final logistic regression model is significant ( $\chi^2 (15) = 74.24, p < .001$ ) with 15 independent variables and no missing observations ( $n = 225$ ).

As presented in Table 9, six variables are predictive of the presence of hypothetical discussion of migrant crime: migration status in the article headline ( $B. = .795, SE = .418$ ), Islam ( $B. = 1.30, SE = .612$ ), an irregular migration status ( $B. = .958, SE = .407$ ), violent crime ( $B. = .896, SE = .372$ ), positive discussion about migration ( $B. = 1.82, SE = .903$ ), and US-focused content ( $B. = 1.00, SE = .464$ ).

Three variables significantly predict the absence of hypothetical discussion: crime in the article headline ( $B. = -.911, SE = .443$ ), use of a migrant quote ( $B. = -1.66, SE = .514$ ), and mention of migration detention ( $B. = -.857, SE = .421$ ). Relative to the impact of other variables, the reporting country, number of migrant races, property crime, statements refuting migrant crime, and deportation are not significantly related to hypothetical discussion.

**Table 9. Predictability of hypothetical discussion of migrant crime**

Hypothetical Discussion Present	Coef.	Std. Err.	z	$p >  z $	[95% Conf. Interval]	
Canadian article <sup>a</sup>	.159	.487	0.33	.745	-.796	1.11
UK article <sup>a</sup>	.083	.461	0.18	.857	-.820	.986
Migration status in headline	.795	.418	1.90	.057 <sup>†</sup>	-.025	1.61
Crime in the headline	-.911	.443	-2.06	.040*	-1.78	-.044
Number of migrant races	.180	.205	0.88	.380	-.222	.583
Islam	1.30	.612	2.13	.033*	.105	2.50
Irregular migration status	.958	.407	2.35	.019*	.160	1.76
Violent crime	.896	.372	2.41	.016*	.167	1.63
Property crime	-.817	.544	-1.50	.133	-1.88	.249
Positive discussion	1.82	.903	2.02	.044*	.052	3.59
Statement refuting migrant crime	-.715	.444	-1.61	.107	-1.58	.155
Migrant quote	-1.66	.514	-3.23	.001***	-2.67	-.654
Detention	-.857	.421	-2.04	.042*	-1.68	-.032
Deportation	-.468	.412	-1.14	.256	-1.27	.339
US-focused content	1.00	.464	2.16	.031*	.091	1.91

<sup>a</sup> US article as reference category; \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ ; <sup>†</sup> Marginal significance.

#### 4.6.4. Which Elements or Characteristics of a Newspaper Article Containing Migrant Crime are Predictive of Greater Article Prominence (Operationalized as Word Count)?

The final OLS model is significant ( $f(16, 208) = 8.93, p < .001; R^2 = 0.41$ ) with 16 independent variables and no missing observations ( $n = 225$ ).

As presented in Table 10, six variables are predictive of increased article prominence (word count): articles from the US (relative to Canadian ( $B. = -.134, SE = .069$ ) and UK ( $B. = -.147, SE = .070$ ) articles), the number of migrant races mentioned ( $B. = .116, SE = .029$ ), discussion of property crime ( $B. = .302, SE = .083$ ), positive discussion about migration ( $B. = .241, SE = .102$ ), use of a migrant quote ( $B. = .245, SE = .078$ ), and mention of migration detention ( $B. = .161, SE = .064$ ).

Four variables are significantly predictive of decreased article prominence. Canadian articles ( $B. = -.134, SE = .069$ ) and UK articles ( $B. = -.147, SE = .070$ ) have lower prominence when compared to US articles (the reference category), and articles with mention of migration status ( $B. = -.245, SE = .061$ ) and/or crime ( $B. = -.396, SE = .068$ ) in the headline are also associated with a lower word count. In relation to the impact of other variables, mention of Islam, an irregular migration status, violent crime, negative discussion about migration, a statement refuting migrant crime, mention of deportation, and US-focused content are not significantly related to article prominence.

**Table 10. Predictability of article prominence (word count)**

Article Prominence (Word Count)	Coef.	Std. Err.	z	$p >  z $	[95% Conf. Interval]	
Canadian article <sup>a</sup>	-.134	.069	-1.93	.054 <sup>†</sup>	-.271	.003
UK article <sup>a</sup>	-.147	.070	-2.11	.036*	-.285	-.010
Migration status in headline	-.245	.061	-3.99	.000***	-.366	-.124
Crime in the headline	-.396	.068	-5.86	.000***	-.529	-.263
Number of migrant races	.116	.029	3.95	.000***	.058	.175
Islam	.102	.081	1.26	.209	-.057	.261
Irregular migration status	.006	.061	0.09	.928	-.116	.127
Violent crime	.013	.058	0.22	.826	-.102	.128
Property crime	.302	.083	3.64	.000***	.138	.465
Positive discussion	.241	.102	2.36	.019*	.039	.442
Negative discussion	.101	.065	1.55	.123	-.028	.230
Statement refuting migrant crime	.116	.069	1.69	.093	-.020	.253

<b>Migrant quote</b>	.245	.078	3.14	.002**	.091	.399
<b>Detention</b>	.161	.064	2.50	.013*	.034	.287
<b>Deportation</b>	.060	.063	0.96	.340	-.064	.184
<b>US-focused content</b>	.061	.069	0.88	.381	-.076	.197

<sup>a</sup> US article as reference category.

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

† Marginal significance.

## 4.7. Discussion

The overall aim of the current study is to examine newspaper coverage of migrant crime and to identify key components and trends in such media representation. Using a sample of 225 articles, including 75 each from Canada, the UK, and the US, articles were coded on a series of 16 variables examining aspects of news stories that include discussion of migrant crime (e.g., mention of migrant race, Islam, irregular migration, types of crime). The quantitative portion of this study examines (a) the presence of hypothetical discussion of migrant crime and (b) the prominence (word count) of articles containing discussion of migrant crime. Following is a discussion of the significance and potential implications of the results.

### 4.7.1. Which Elements or Characteristics of a Newspaper Article Containing Migrant Crime are Predictive of the Hypothetical Discussion of Migrant Crime?

#### *Positive predictors*

Articles noting an individual or group migration status in the headline are marginally more likely to include hypothetical discussion of migrant crime. It may be that an article intending to capitalize on migration as its subject matter, by referencing it in the headline, is more likely to expand into hypothetical discussion surrounding migration and its areas of controversy, including perceived risks to safety and security. In other words, articles drawing attention to migrants in their headlines may be more likely to continue to exploit the sensationalism surrounding these populations within the article itself, leading to hypothetical discussion rather than simply reporting on concrete, factual events. However, because this variable is only marginally significant ( $p = .057$ ) this finding should be interpreted with caution.

Positive discussion of migration in articles is associated with the presence of hypothetical discussion of migrant crime. Though perhaps counterintuitive, this may be due to an attempted counterbalancing of negative rhetoric on the part of the journalist. For example, during the in-depth qualitative portion of this study, it became apparent that after highlighting the negative hypothetical assertions of certain politicians or organizations, some articles then follow with information on the many positive contributions of migration to receiving countries' societies. While helpful in terms of balancing the narrative, this approach may indicate a lack of incentive to report positively on migrants and their beneficial contributions to society (Christoph, 2012) without first exposing a tenuous connection to something negative – in this case, crime.

Articles that mention Islam or any of its components (e.g., mosques; face coverings) are more likely to include hypothetical discussion of migrant crime. This may be a reflection of the sensationalism stemming from North American and European Islamophobia (Gallup, n.d.; Gunduz, 2010; Pratt, 2015) and the fact that “Muslims are often presented as (and/or conflated with) Islamists/fundamentalists and accordingly associated with terrorism” (Christoph, 2012, p. 100; Hoewe & Bowe, 2018). Western nations have experienced moral panics over Islam regarding safety, security, and societal values; thus, the merging of Islam with the topic of migrant crime may create a rich environment for hypothetical discussion in the form of fearful and accusatory postulations. Migrant populations from Muslim-majority regions may face additional, or perhaps simply a specific type, of prejudice rooted in the West's stereotypical understanding of the ‘Muslim terrorist’ that has permeated western consciousness since 9/11 and, more recently, since the emergence of the Islamic extremist terrorist group ISIS/ISIL/Daesh<sup>7</sup> (Erbay & Aslan, 2017; Gallup, n.d.). Notably, US President Trump has made unsubstantiated claims that members of ISIS would infiltrate the US through Latin American migrant caravans seeking asylum in the US (Hutchinson, 2018; Russell, 2018). Such accusations are an example of the baseless capitalization on Islamophobia that can be extended to even thoroughly unrelated issues, creating a link between migration and a fear of crime (i.e., violence and terrorism).

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<sup>7</sup> The name “Daesh” was given to the self-proclaimed Islamic State of Iraq and Syria/Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant in an effort to distance the terrorist group from Islam and Muslims as a whole. This exemplifies the degree to which media's sensationalism and use of certain terms can cause harm to a broader population.

When irregular migration is an element of the story, articles are more likely to include hypothetical discussion of migrant crime. This may be due to the particularly unfavourable position that undocumented or 'illegal' migrants occupy in many public narratives. If migration is a contentious subject in the West's current sociopolitical climate, the issue of 'illegal' migration is a proverbial powder keg, particularly in sought-after destination countries or locations that share a border with large 'migrant-producing' regions (Becerra, 2016; Vollmer, 2011). It may be that articles discussing irregular migration have a tendency to become speculative owing to the sensitive nature of the topic and the strong reactions to this subject exhibited by politicians and the public. Additionally, when a citizen is harmed (e.g., murdered or sexually assaulted) by a migrant individual with an irregular status, the public and media reaction is especially fierce owing to the perceived preventability of the crime. In essence, when an individual is in a country illegally, it is as though the crime would not have occurred *but for* the failure to keep them from crossing the border (Sohoni & Sohoni, 2014). When such crime is sensationalized by the media, it may trigger anxieties around safety and security, as well as facilitate a biased perception of undocumented migrants and the risks they pose to citizen populations. The implication of such sensationalism is that an irregular migrant who commits a crime comes to represent the risk of crime posed by any and all irregular migrants. This perception persists despite empirical evidence that migrants – documented and undocumented – commit crime at a lower rate than born citizens (Ignatans & Roebuck, 2018; Kremer et al., 2019; Light & Miller, 2018; Plecas et al., 1996). The hypothetical discussion of risk posed by irregular migrants has tangible consequences; a prominent example is the issue of mass migrant detention taking place at the US-Mexico border. Though criminalizing the seeking of asylum is illegal under international law (law that has been ratified by the US), migrants are frequently detained at the border in inhumane, prison-like facilities and criminally charged for unauthorized crossing (International Rescue Committee, 2019). Further, though Canada and the UK may not garner as much international attention, their treatment and legislation of irregular migrants – restrictions, prolonged detention, poor facility conditions, etc. – has been similarly problematic (Atak et al., 2018; Geddes, 2005; Global Detention Project, 2020; The Migration Observatory, 2020).

The mention of violent crime in an article increases the likelihood that there will be hypothetical discussion of migrant crime. Owing to the “selective nature of crime

news... with its emphasis on violence and sensationalism” (Dowler et al., 2006, p. 839), coupled with the tendency for “violence involving ethnic minorities [to be] linked to controversial issues like illegal immigration” (Gruenewald et al., 2013, p. 757), violent migrant crime presents an attractive candidate for a news story. If violent crime involves a migrant offender or suspect, the discussion may well venture into the theoretical, speculating about future risk posed by other migrants. As discussed, violent crime committed by migrants is likely to be considered excess crime (Sohoni & Sohoni, 2014), and “the use of serious crime stories as political events for the advancement of specific causes is, unfortunately, a regularly recurring effect of these accounts” (Dowler et al., 2006, p. 842). Extrapolating from a violent crime committed by a migrant to a broad generalized risk of future violent migrant crime contributes to prejudice that negatively impacts these populations.

Last, when the content of an article focuses on events and issues in the US, the article is more likely to include hypothetical discussion of migrant crime. This may be partially due to the large proportion of articles in the sample that focused on the US: Over 40 percent of Canadian and UK articles were primarily focused on events in the US and, unsurprisingly, the majority of articles from the US itself (87%) focused on issues and events within its own borders. The overall number of articles focused on events in the US was also statistically significant at the bivariate level ( $\chi^2 (2) = 38.51, p < .001$ ). It is possible that the divisive, highly partisan nature of US politics lends itself to greater hypothetical discussion as nationalism, insularism, and ‘othering’ may be considered commonplace within the current American culture. Bivariate analysis shows US articles are marginally significantly more likely to contain hypothetical discussion (76%) than not (24%;  $\chi^2 (1) = 3.66, p = .056$ ). This concentration of hypothetical content within US articles, in combination with international media attention, may result in more articles overall reiterating the hypothetical rhetoric and narratives stemming from the US.

### ***Negative predictors***

Referencing crime – specifically or generally – in an article headline makes it less likely that the article will contain hypothetical discussion of migrant crime. Articles with reference to crime in the headline may be more focused on reporting actual crime events, subsequently making them less likely to stray from the facts and engage in speculation: Wong and Harraway (2020) found that newspaper articles containing

discussion of homicides where the primary purpose of the article was to report the crime were less sensational in nature than articles discussing homicide within another primary context. The authors hypothesized that this finding was owed to a greater focus on the often-limited facts of the case at hand in articles devoted to reporting a killing. Similarly, articles with a sufficient enough focus on crime to include it in the headline may be less likely to venture into additional, hypothetical details.

Articles that include a direct quote from a migrant individual are also less likely to include hypothetical discussion of migrant crime. This may be related to migrants themselves being given an opportunity to voice their own opinions and perspectives about an event, reducing the validity of speculation. Additionally, it may represent an awareness on the part of the media outlet or journalist regarding more equitable representation of migrants in media (Berry et al., 2015) – something that has traditionally been in woefully short supply (CCME & WACC Europe, 2017; Trebbe & Schoenhagen, 2011). A report on media representation of migrants in Europe states that “of the news items that reference migrants or refugees, less than half (40%) of the articles quote them directly”, indicating a trend of “indirect representation of refugees and migrants in the news” (CCME & WACC Europe, 2017, p. 5). Additionally, because migrant populations can be difficult for journalists to access – perhaps owing to challenges with language or hesitancy to engage with the media – this can also lead to “migrants being less visible as quoted sources” in news stories (Eberl et al., 2018, p. 216). As such, it is important to develop the inclusion of migrant sources in news about migration, and it is possible that news producers who do so are aware of this need and therefore less likely to engage in harmful hypotheticals. In other words, articles that more directly involve migrants in the telling of the story may be less likely to venture into assumptions and speculations about this population owing to enhanced representation.

Last, discussion of migration detention is less likely to occur alongside hypothetical discussion of migrant crime. This is surprising as it might be assumed that the association between crime and pre-deportation detention would provide a springboard for further discussion of the risk of migrant offending. It is possible that migration detention does not play a large role in hypothetical discussion of migrant crime because it is so greatly associated with poor conditions and inhumane treatment, highlighting nations’ shortcomings and the infringement of human rights. The controversy in the US surrounding the Trump administration’s family



separation/detention policy, as well as criticisms over prolonged or indefinite detention of migrants in Canada and the UK (Atak et al., 2018; Geddes, 2005; Global Detention Project, 2020; The Migration Observatory, 2020), may render migration detention a topic more useful in the critique of governments and their policies rather than migrants themselves. A more critical look at the detainment and poor treatment of migrants may protect against hypothesizing about migrant crime risk.

#### **4.7.2. Which Elements or Characteristics of a Newspaper Article Containing Migrant Crime are Predictive of Greater Article Prominence (Operationalized as Word Count)?**

##### ***Positive predictors***

Articles from the US are more likely to have a higher word count than articles from Canada or the UK, possibly indicating a greater proclivity for reporting at length on the subject of crime and migration (though possibly simply an indication of US journalistic style relative to Canadian and UK counterparts).

When articles contain a specific migrant racial category, they are associated with a higher word count. Further, the greater the number of migrant races identified (of Middle Eastern, Hispanic, Caribbean, South Asian, East Asian, or White) the higher the article word count. This may be indicative of the media's sensationalism of race, or it may indicate a need for greater background information or context to explain the role of race in the story, or the relevance of the multiple actors involved in the report.

Articles containing discussion of property crime are likely to be longer than articles without discussion of property crime. Initially it was thought that articles containing discussion of violent crime would be more likely to drive up article word count owing to the sensationalized nature of violence in the news. However, Spenkuch (2014) discusses how migration does not appear to have amplified violent crime in receiving countries, "but may have led to an increase in property crimes" (p. 181). Some research suggests that "poor labor market outcomes" may explain a greater association between migration and property offenses, hypothesizing that those with "[l]ow levels of education, low wages, higher levels of unemployment, and difficulties assimilating" may be more prone to engage in non-violent crime (pp. 178, 182). Additionally, a large proportion of migrants are young and male – a demographic "especially likely to be involved in

criminal activity”, for reasons wholly unrelated to migration status (p. 179; see also Andresen, 2012). However, discussion of property crime appearing within broader stories, adding to length, may effectively add context through information that would not create an interesting enough story in its own right.

Positive discussion of migration is associated with an elevated word count. It may be that journalists who choose to present positive information within articles discussing migrant crime are aiming to provide a more rounded perspective on the subject. This would require the provision of additional information to counterbalance the negative elements of the story, resulting in a longer article. The inclusion of a direct quote from a migrant individual also increases the likelihood of a higher word count. Similar to the presence of positive discussion, it may be that directly including migrant voices in the story indicates an attempt at a more rounded perspective, resulting in a longer article overall. It may also be that interview excerpts in general add to the length of a story.

Last, articles that discuss migration detention are more likely to have a higher word count than articles without such discussion. This may be owing to the previously discussed controversial nature of migration detention and its recent prominence in the media and public conscience. International condemnation and outcry from the political left *and* political right (Brice & Allen, 2019; Watkins, 2018) raises the possibility that migration detention has become synonymous with its ancillary issues— e.g., pathways to citizenship; entitlement to resources and opportunity; civil and human rights; In this way, migration detention provides an array of potential avenues for discussion which may result in lengthier news articles.

### ***Negative predictors***

Of the sample countries, Canadian articles ( $p = .054$ ) and UK articles ( $p = .036$ ) are likely to have a lower word count when compared to articles from the US (the reference category). This finding indicates that the US produces longer articles containing discussion of migrant crime than the other two sample countries. This may be due to the relative prominence of migration as a contentious sociopolitical issue in the US, or simply due to journalistic style. Of note, Canadian articles are only marginally more likely to have a lower word count than articles from the US.

When migration status is mentioned in an article headline, the article is more likely to have a lower word count. This is somewhat surprising as it could be assumed that the presence of migration status in a headline would indicate a capitalization on migration status as a topic of discussion. This in turn might be expected to lead to greater speculation about migration and crime within the narrative, potentially leading to longer articles. Similarly, when there is mention of crime in the headline, the article is also more likely to have a lower word count. As discussed in relation to hypothetical discussion, this may be owing to articles focusing on crime being more succinct as they are covering concrete information regarding a (possibly emergent) event (Wong & Harraway, 2020).

## **4.8. Conclusion**

The quantitative analyses in this study used logistic and OLS regression to examine newspaper story elements and article characteristics and their impact on hypothetical discussion of migrant crime and article prominence (word count).

Certain story elements and article characteristics increase the likelihood that an article will include hypothetical discussion of migrant crime: When an article headline contains mention of an individual or group's migration status, these articles may be more likely to include hypothetical discussion of migrant crime, with marginal significance. The discussion of positive aspects of migration, Islam, violent crime, or US-focused content significantly increases the likelihood that an article will present hypotheticals or speculation about migrant crime. Conversely, when an article mentions crime in the headline, includes a direct quote from a migrant individual, or contains discussion of migration detention, it is significantly less likely to include hypothetical discussion of migrant crime.

The likelihood that an article will have a higher or lower word count is similarly affected by the presence of several story elements and article characteristics. Articles that are produced in the US, or articles that include one or more migrant race, the discussion of property crime, a direct quote from a migrant individual, or discussion of migration detention are all associated with a significant increase in word count. Articles

that are produced in Canada<sup>8</sup> or the UK, and articles where migration status or crime is mentioned in the headline, are associated with a significant decrease in word count.

To conclude, several article elements and characteristics are associated with the hypothetical discussion of migrant crime, potentially influencing stereotypes and unfounded perceptions of migrant populations. Further, the specific focus on hypothetical migrant crime in the news appears to be a sparse topic in the current literature, making this construct particularly deserving of exploration and assessment. Article content and characteristics also impact article prominence, potentially affecting issue salience.

#### **4.8.1. Limitations**

There are limitations specific to the quantitative portion of this study. First, a larger sample of articles may have given more power to certain content or characteristics that may have been insufficiently represented in the current 225 articles. A larger sample may also have illustrated greater significant comparisons between the three countries, and/or may have revealed greater influence of marginal variables.

Second, the quantitative models were constructed using variables that held theoretical value in the context of migrant crime news. With a larger and/or more diverse sample, other variables may have emerged as relevant during the coding process.

Similarly, third, the inclusion criteria for this study relied on explicit and direct language to indicate the presence of migration and crime in an article. Therefore, articles containing only implicit indicators of either migration or criminal activity would have been excluded from the sample. This also means that any follow-up or ancillary articles that do not contain the same explicit indicators found in the initial articles would not have been included in the sample. This may have further influenced the composition of variables present, potentially impacting their frequency and subsequent statistical impact.

Last, the definitions and parameters of violent and property crime were constructed to best encapsulate the variety of crime types present in the sample. The

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<sup>8</sup> Marginal significance.

organization used in this study may not necessarily follow existing categorization; however, the decision to include some less frequently mentioned crime types (e.g., kidnapping) within a broader variable (e.g., violent crime) was done to avoid constructing miniscule miscellaneous crime categories in the analysis.

Additional limitations relevant to the overall study will be discussed in chapter 6.

## Chapter 5. Positive and Negative Discussion of Migration

### 5.1. Research Questions

Following the quantitative coding process described in the previous chapter, areas of interest were identified for in-depth qualitative analysis. It was determined that certain articles contained distinctly ‘pro-migrant’ statements that appeared counter to the overall nature of the sample. The presence of ‘pro-migrant’ content suggested a need to investigate the positive story elements among the otherwise negative, crime-related content as well as to more deeply investigate the majority negative statements about migration in the articles. The following research questions were developed:

1. *How are positive aspects of migration framed in newspaper articles containing migrant crime?*

This question seeks to explore the positive discussion of migration occurring within articles containing migrant crime. Articles with explicit positive discussion of migration provide a counter argument and alternative perspective to the negative migration narrative.

2. *How are negative aspects of migration framed in newspaper articles containing migrant crime?*

This question seeks to explore the negative discussion of migration occurring within articles containing migrant crime. Because the sample is predicated on an inherently negative feature – crime – this question is separated into two sub-questions:

- i. *How are the crime-related negative story elements framed within the broader theme of ‘crime’?*
- ii. *How are the non-crime negative story elements framed?*

The former seeks to examine the crime-related negative story elements (e.g., risk or fear of migrant crime), which were unequivocally present owing to the nature of the sample. The latter looks more closely at the negative story elements that are un-related

to the article's nexus with crime (e.g., concerns regarding job loss to migrants or expenditure of state resources on non-citizens).

## **5.2. Coding**

Qualitative research questions were developed based on the quantitative data and analyses as well as existing themes in the literature on media representation of migration (Eberl et al., 2018; OECD, 2014; Thompson, 2014). Qualitative coding was performed in NVivo 12 and identified themes and codes within two broader concepts: positive and negative migrant representation. The analysis of positive migrant representation comprises 17 articles (of the full 225) that contain mention of migration 'positives' – occurrences, processes, or contributions of migration cast in a positive light or as being beneficial to the receiving country. The analysis of negative migrant representation comprises 106 articles (of the full 225) that contain mention of migration 'negatives' – any impacts of migration perceived as unjust or damaging to the receiving nation. The coding process is explained in detail in a second, qualitative codebook (see Appendix B).

Inter-rater reliability checks were performed for both analyses. For the analysis of positive discussion, all 17 articles were examined by a second coder. For the analysis of negative discussion, a random number generator was used to select 33 percent of the articles from each sample country, producing 11 Canadian articles, 10 UK articles, and 14 US articles for a total of 35 articles. The coding was exported from NVivo and quantified in an Excel spreadsheet (1 = code/category present; 0 = code/category absent). The second coder populated an Excel sheet with binary coding based on their interpretation of the sampled articles, guided by the qualitative codebook. A Krippendorff's alpha reliability coefficient was established at .99 for the analysis of positive discussion and an alpha of .97 was computed for the analysis of negative discussion.

## **5.3. Variables**

In the first analysis, positive aspects of migration are explored with in-depth qualitative content analysis. Iterative exposure to the sample throughout the quantitative analyses revealed discussion of positive aspects of migration such as bringing needed

skills and labour to the receiving country, favourable contributions to culture and diversity, and even the advantageous effect of migration on crime rates. These benefits are corroborated in the literature on positive elements of migration, though it is acknowledged that in most cases such positive representation is missing from the media narrative (Berry et al., 2015; Eberl et al., 2018; Lee et al., 2001; Orrenius & Zavodny, 2019; OECD, 2014), and were thus cemented as foundational themes for this analysis. In addition to discussion of skills/credentials, economy/labour, culture, and crime reduction, an additional theme of receiving country self-interest was identified in the articles.

In the second analysis, negative aspects of migration are explored in the same manner described above. Themes for this analysis were determined via the literature on migrant ‘threat’ frames in the media (Berry et al., 2015; Eberl et al., 2018; Tong & Zuo, 2019). These themes include migrant links with crime and migrant threats to values, resources, and jobs.

## **5.4. Analytics**

Qualitatively, this study examines two key concepts – positive and negative presentation of migration – and provides context and a deeper understanding of their role in the representation of migrant criminality. Qualitative analyses were conducted using NVivo 12, and the same process was undertaken for both research questions. Qualitative content analysis is lauded as an accessible and flexible approach to “the subjective interpretation of the content of text through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns” (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1278; see also Clarke & Braun, 2017). Thematic analysis, specifically, is a “method for identifying, analyzing, and interpreting patterns of meaning... within qualitative data” (Clarke & Braun, 2017, p. 297). A vast range of potential qualitative approaches, coupled with a collective tendency in the research community to omit detailed qualitative analytics from published work, make it essential to clearly outline qualitative processes (Nowell et al., 2017). Following is a detailed explanation of the process undertaken in this study.



### **5.4.1. Establishing Trustworthiness**

'Trustworthiness' is defined as a way to demonstrate the legitimacy of qualitative research and is said to "parallel the conventional quantitative assessment criteria of validity and reliability" (Nowell et al., 2017, p. 3). Trustworthiness in qualitative research can be demonstrated in a number of ways, such as credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Nowell et al., 2017). Credibility is defined as the 'fit' between the data and the researcher's representation of the data; Transferability can be achieved through the provision of adequately "thick descriptions" of the data so that others may assess its relevance in additional contexts; Dependability stems from readers' ability to wholly and accurately assess the research process, judging for themselves its progression and logic, facilitated by clear and comprehensive documentation; Last, confirmability is said to be achieved when the proceeding three elements have been properly established (p. 3).

Given the nature of the sample in the current study, confirming the journalistic interpretation or intention of each article is plainly beyond the scope of the research at hand; however, by conducting researcher triangulation in the form of inter-rater reliability assessments with two additional coders, credibility is improved and some reassurance provided that the concepts, themes, and codes used in this study are logical by the standards of more than a single researcher (Nowell et al., 2017). Maximizing transferability and dependability has been attempted through comprehensive descriptions of both the data and the processes, drawing from manifold notes taken throughout the research process in order to accurately reflect interpretations and decision making over the course of this research. Overall confirmability is supported by explaining the rationale behind each starting point, decision, trajectory, outcome, and interpretation in this study (Nowell et al., 2017).

### **5.4.2. Terminology**

The constituent elements of qualitative content analysis require a brief explanation. The terms 'concept', 'theme', and 'code' will be used throughout this study to describe the levels of data. For example, in the context of the current study, a concept would be the broad positive discussion of migration within articles containing migrant crime; a theme for this concept would be the economic benefits of migration, and codes

for this theme would be indicators in the article text such as the words “job”, “workers”, or “employment” alongside mention of migration. These elements may function in a top-down or bottom-up approach. In a bottom-up/inductive approach, codes – which are the smallest element in the analysis and made up of particular words or phrases found in a body of text – provide the basis for the development of themes, which can be defined as “patterns of meaning” within the text (Clarke & Braun, 2017, p. 297). These themes are eventually used to illuminate an overarching key concept reflected in the data. The inverse process – a top-down/deductive approach – would begin with a known key concept, and possibly pre-existing themes, and would require the researcher to comb their data for the codes that identify and reflect these themes and key constructs.

### **5.4.3. Approach and Process**

The qualitative analyses in this study can be described as a mix of directed and conventional content analysis. Directed content analysis occurs when a deductive approach is taken in the identification of key concepts, themes, and codes, guided by existing research and extant operationalizations (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Conversely, conventional content analysis uses an inductive process and allows concepts, themes, and codes to emerge from the data (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Qualitative analysis in the current study began with key concepts generated from the earlier quantitative exploration of the data, and also used extant categorizations from the literature to form initial themes and coding points. During the multiple rounds of coding, additional themes and subthemes were identified and included in the original framework. By supplementing a deductive foundation with inductive discoveries, the qualitative portion of this research grounds itself in existing scholarly work while simultaneously avoiding tunnel vision and mitigating bias (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

To generate the sub-samples that formed the two qualitative analyses, articles from the total sample were sorted into two categories: articles containing perceived “pros” to migration ( $n = 17$ ) – positive discussion about the impacts of migration – and articles containing perceived “cons” associated with migration ( $n = 106$ ) – negative discussion about the impacts of migration. To qualify, these positive and negative discussions needed to reflect broad, generalized impressions of migration rather than individual or small-scale events without extrapolation. Further, the two analyses are not mutually exclusive; the same article can appear in both sub-samples. The left-over

articles ( $n = 113$ ) were confirmed to contain only non-generalized discussion<sup>9</sup>. For an overview of the general article topics within which the thematic content occurs, see Appendix C.

After being sorted, each sub-sample was analyzed separately. Identifying which articles contained the expressions of interest and pre-organizing them prior to coding helped to streamline each analysis and ensured that every instance of the phenomenon of interest was identified and included in coding (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). All relevant code words (e.g., *jobs*, *economy*, *cohesion*, *skills*) and their surrounding text, when in reference to migrants or migration, were highlighted and sorted into 'nodes' in NVivo 12. These nodes carried preliminary working titles and definitions that were later refined to best reflect their thematic content (e.g., *Links with Crime*, *Resources*). Once coding was complete, data were reviewed within each node and checked against other themes to ensure the data were properly categorized. Where necessary, larger nodes were broken down into sub-themes to reflect a large range of relevant content (e.g., within *Links with Crime*: *Gangs*, *Homicide*, *Terrorism*, and more). Data were then summarized in a codebook in order to give an overview of the themes, sub-themes, and examples of each.

## 5.5. Findings

### 5.5.1. How Are Positive Aspects of Migration Framed in Newspaper Articles Containing Migrant Crime?

The first thematic content analysis resulted in the development of five themes pertaining to positive elements of migration: (1) *Economy*, (2) *State Interest*, (3) *Credentials*, (4) *Crime Reduction*, and (5) *Culture*. These themes are illustrated in Table 11.

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<sup>9</sup> It should be clarified that it is possible for an article to have been quantitatively coded as containing hypothetical discussion but qualitatively categorized as containing no negative discussion. The quantitative variable for hypothetical discussion encapsulates everything from broad generalizations about migrant crime to instances of individual migrants who are being accused of crime. The latter would not qualify as 'negative discussion' in the qualitative analysis because it does not generalize beyond the individual. In this way, 46/225 articles qualify as containing hypothetical discussion in the quantitative analysis but no negative discussion in the qualitative analysis.

**Table 11. Themes in the positive discussion of migration**

<b>Positive Discussion of Migration – N = 17</b>	
<b>Theme (n (%))</b>	<b>Articles per country</b>
1. Economy (n = 13 (76%))	CAN = 4; UK = 3; US = 6
2. State Interest (n = 10 (59%))	CAN = 3; UK = 3; US = 4
3. Credentials (n = 5 (29%))	CAN = 2; UK = 1; US = 2
4. Crime Reduction (n = 3 (18%))	CAN = 2; UK = 0; US = 1
5. Culture (n = 3 (18%))	CAN = 0; UK = 2; US = 1

Note: Themes overlap – number of articles/percentages do not equal 100%.

### **(1) Economy (n = 13 (76%))**

*Economy*, the predominant theme in this analysis, focuses on migration positives that lend a clear, quantifiable benefit to receiving countries. Migrants are mentioned as contributing to the economy by creating and filling jobs, generating taxes and revenue, as well as via non-specific ‘economic’ contribution.

### **(2) State Interest (n = 10 (59%))**

*State Interest* is the second-most prominent theme, comprising pro-migrant content expressed as directly advantageous to receiving countries. Migrants are mentioned as contributing to receiving countries by fulfilling a *specific* self-interest of the state (e.g., migrants filling labour positions *unwanted by born citizens*). This theme often overlaps with *Economy* but includes aspects of political benefit and credentials as well.

### **(3) Credentials (n = 5 (29%))**

*Credentials* reflects article content wherein migrants are mentioned as possessing desirable qualifications/skills, discussed as the receiving country needing/desiring them or as the receiving country having already benefitted from them.

### **(4) Crime Reduction (n = 3 (18%))**

Migrants are mentioned as reducing crime/crime rates in receiving countries in the *Crime Reduction* theme. Migration’s effect on crime reduction is always discussed in the context of empirical research on the topic.

### **(5) Culture (n = 3 (18%))**

*Culture* covers article content wherein migrants are mentioned as enriching the culture of a receiving country (e.g., migrants revitalizing their new neighbourhoods).

### 5.5.2. How Are Negative Aspects of Migration Framed in Newspaper Articles Containing Migrant Crime?

The second analysis resulted in the development of four themes pertaining to negative elements of migration, as illustrated in Table 12: (1) *Links with Crime* (2) *Values*, (3) *Resources*, (4) *Jobs*.

*Links with Crime* includes 15 sub-themes – (a) *Crime (Generic or Other)*, (b) *Race or Religion*, (c) *Homicide*, (d) *Undocumented*, (e) *Borders*, (f) *Gangs*, (g) *Failure of State*, (h) *Sexual Assault*, (i) *Terrorism*, (j) *Manipulation*, (k) *“Rapists and Criminals”*, (l) *‘Over There’*, (m) *Refugees/Asylum Seekers*, (n) *Drugs*, and (o) *Wolf in Sheep’s Clothing*.

**Table 12. Themes in the negative discussion of migration**

Negative Discussion of Migration – N = 106		
Theme (n, (%))	Sub-Themes (n, (%))	Articles per country
1. Links with Crime (n = 101 (95%))	4a. Crime (Generic or Other) (n = 60 (59%))	CAN = 15; UK = 17; US = 28
	4b. Race or Religion (n = 47 (47%))	CAN = 14; UK = 14; US = 19
	4c. Homicide (n = 40 (39%))	CAN = 14; UK = 7; US = 19
	4d. Undocumented (n = 36 (36%))	CAN = 8; UK = 6; US = 22
	4e. Borders (n = 29 (29%))	CAN = 7; UK = 7; US = 15
	4f. Gangs (n = 25 (25%))	CAN = 9; UK = 5; US = 11
	4g. Failure of State (n = 21 (21%))	CAN = 7; UK = 3; US = 11
	4h. Sexual Assault (n = 21 (21%))	CAN = 4; UK = 11; US = 6
	4i. Terrorism (n = 17 (17%))	CAN = 9; UK = 3; US = 5
	4j. Manipulation (n = 16 (16%))	CAN = 5; UK = 5; US = 6
	4k. “Rapists and Criminals” (n = 15 (15%))	CAN = 9; UK = 3; US = 3
	4l. ‘Over There’ (n = 14 (14%))	CAN = 6; UK = 6; US = 2
	4m. Refugees/Asylum Seekers (n = 14 (14%))	CAN = 6; UK = 5; US = 3
	4n. Drugs (n = 12 (12%))	CAN = 3; UK = 1; US = 8
	4o. Wolf in Sheep’s Clothing (n = 10 (10%))	CAN = 5; UK = 2; US = 3
4. Values (n = 27 (25%))		CAN = 8; UK = 8; US = 11
3. Resources (n = 13 (12%))		CAN = 7; UK = 3; US = 3
2. Jobs (n = 8 (8%))		CAN = 6; UK = 1; US = 1

Note: Themes and sub-themes overlap – number of articles/percentages will not equal 100%; \*Theme percentages are from the total N of 106; \*\*Sub-theme percentages are from the parent theme, not the total N of 106.

### **(1) *Links with Crime* (n = 101 (95%))**

*Links with Crime* is, unsurprisingly, the most dominant theme in this analysis. The content of this theme comprises broad generalization about the risk of migrant crime. These risks are expressed in multiple forms in the following (non-mutually exclusive) 15 sub-themes:

#### **(4a) *Crime (Generic or Other)* (n = 60 (59%))**

This is the most common sub-theme in the analysis, comprising only non-specific references to migrants and crime. In essence, a specific offence is never mentioned, only a general 'crime'. That this is the most frequent manifestation of crime-related negative discussion indicates a focus on vague notions about migration and crime.

#### **(4b) *Race or Religion* (n = 47 (47%))**

Migrant crime with a connection to a specific race or religion is captured here. Another common sub-theme, its frequency suggests a possible focus on racialized or religiously affiliated migrants.

#### **(4c) *Homicide* (n = 39 (39%))**

Here, the risk of migrant-perpetrated homicide is discussed. Among the more common sub-themes, this content may capture an extension of violent crime's popularity in the media.

#### **(4d) *Undocumented* (n = 36 (36%))**

Concerns specific to undocumented migrants and proscribed avenues of migration are captured here.

#### **(4e) *Borders* (n = 29 (29%))**

Here, issues around open borders and cross-border movement contributing to crime in receiving countries are discussed.

#### **(4f) *Gangs* (n = 25 (25%))**

All mention of gang activity linked with migration is captured in this sub-theme (e.g., MS-13 (US)).

**(4g) Failure of State (*n* = 21 (21%))**

This sub-theme comprises instances in which migrant-perpetrated crime and further risk of migrant crime is attributed to the failing of a country's government in the duty to protect its citizens.

**(4h) Sexual Assault (*n* = 21 (21%))**

Here, the risk of migrant-perpetrated sexual offences is discussed, highlighting a specific concern around migrants and sexual violence.

**(4i) Terrorism (*n* = 17 (17%))**

Discussion of the risk of migrant-perpetrated terrorism is captured in this sub-theme.

**(4j) Manipulation (*n* = 16 (16%))**

Here, instances of government or media manipulation casting migrants as criminals and intending to create fear of migrant crime (e.g., political attack ads highlighting killings by migrants) is covered.

**(4k) “Rapists and Criminals” (*n* = 15 (15%))**

All instances and iterations of Donald Trump's infamous “rapists and criminals” comment pertaining to Mexican migrants in the US are captured in this sub-theme.

**(4l) ‘Over There’ (*n* = 14 (14%))**

The contents of this sub-theme reference other regions in the world experiencing migrant crime with the implication that the reporting country does not wish to succumb to the same fate.

**(4m) Refugees/Asylum Seekers (*n* = 14 (14%))**

This sub-theme captures instances of migrant crime that are connected specifically to refugees/asylum seekers.

**(4n) Drugs (*n* = 12 (12%))**

All mention of migration and drugs are captured here.

#### **(4o) Wolf in Sheep's Clothing (*n* = 10 (10%))**

Last, discussion of risks posed by migrants, particularly refugees/asylum seekers, who may enter a country under false pretences in order to commit crime and harm the born citizen population is captured here (e.g., the murder of Marris Shen by a recently arrived refugee (Canada); claims of ISIS infiltration of migrant caravans (US)).

#### **(2) *Values* (*n* = 27 (25%))**

In the most dominant of the non-crime related themes, *Values* highlights a focus on migrants as presenting integration concerns and adversely affecting community and cultural cohesion. Additionally, this theme includes references to 'fairness', or born citizens being 'left behind' or 'forgotten'.

#### **(3) *Resources* (*n* = 13 (12%))**

The theme of *Resources* reflects article content wherein migrants are mentioned as stressing, unfairly accessing, or limiting the welfare system and other subsidies, thus negatively impacting born citizens. This theme also includes mention of excessive government spending on migration related issues.

#### **(4) *Jobs* (*n* = 8 (8%))**

In this theme, migrants are mentioned as 'stealing', taking, or limiting employment for born citizens. Interestingly, this content is in direct contrast to the positive discussion of migration's role in the labour market in the previous analysis.

## **5.6. Discussion**

The current study aims to explore the ways in which migration and crime are discussed in news media. From the initial sample of 225 articles, 17 articles were identified as containing positive general discussion of migration, and 106 articles were identified as containing negative general discussion of migration (article categorization is non-mutually exclusive). Following is a discussion of what makes up the positively- and negatively-oriented migration content within articles that discuss migrant crime.

Positive discussion includes migration's relationship with the economy, self-interest of the national state, migrant credentials, migration's effect on crime reduction,



and migrant cultural enrichment. Negative discussion includes the manifestations of migration's perceived link with crime, as well as threats to societal values, state resources, and citizen employment. Thematic content is heavily inter-related, particularly within the many sub-themes of migration's link with crime. In the following discussion, quotations that best encapsulate the overall thematic content are drawn from the articles to illustrate each theme/sub-theme; Not all individual articles in each theme/sub-theme are addressed.

### **5.6.1. How are Positive Aspects of Migration Framed in Newspaper Articles Containing Migrant Crime?**

#### ***Economy***

Articles that include migration's positive impact on the economy make up the largest component of positive discussion in this analysis. The economy is discussed in general terms, as well as specifically regarding the labour market, and taxes and gross domestic product (GDP).

In terms of general economic discussion, a Canadian article states that immigrants "establish new businesses at a higher rate than native-born" citizens, but does not elaborate as to whether this contributes to additional employment opportunities or a monetary benefit for Canada (Ibbitson, 2018b, para. 8). Two articles from the UK discuss how migration's positive impact on the economy is polling more highly recently in the British public eye, as well as mentioning the UK Home Secretary Sajid Javid's acknowledgements of migrants' general economic contributions to the strengthening of Britain (Sparrow, 2018a; Walker, 2018c). Two articles from the US briefly mention vague economic benefits to migration, with one referencing economic "revitalization" and the other touting "prosperity" in California that is built on welcoming "immigrants and innovators from across the globe" (Flagg, 2018, para. 20; Nagourney & Arango, 2018, para. 6). The mention of indistinct, general economic benefits occurs predominantly in passing within a broader article topic and is often presented as a quick and simple way to refute or balance out a negative assertion about migration (e.g., right-wing demands for less immigration).

Regarding the labour market, several Canadian articles state that immigrants "create and fill jobs", partake in low-paying physical labour, fill the demand for specific

roles in society (e.g., in-home caregivers), and make up “more than 5 per cent of the work force and 53 per cent of agricultural labour” in the US (e.g., Ibbitson, 2018b, para. 14; Markham, 2018, para. 33; Saslow, 2018; Keung, 2018a). Similarly, some articles from the UK briefly acknowledge immigrant labour and contain some discussion about creating a system to accommodate the great need for migrant agricultural workers in Britain (e.g., Sparrow, 2018a; Sparrow, 2018b). The latter discussion occurs in the context of proposed changes to British immigration policy that would inhibit low-skill migration to the UK. This continues a juxtaposition in this thematic content, as the British government is openly promoting a more restrictive approach to their migration laws and policies while simultaneously acknowledging that vital sectors of their economy are reliant on migrant labour. Certain articles from the US also reference the reliance of their own and other economies on migrant labour. These articles make repeated mention of “employers who rely on immigrant labor”, “plenty of jobs for newcomers – and employers willing to hire them”, and migrants as being “vital to industries such as agriculture, hospitality and construction” (e.g., Hirschfeld Davis, 2018c, para. 26; Jordan, 2018c, para. 7; Jordan, 2018a, para. 28). Two US articles in particular quote an American business owner and a European politician as stating, respectively, that “[migrants] need me and I need them... [t]here’s nobody else to do the work” and “we need the work force” (Jordan, 2018c, para. 8; Sorensen, 2018, para. 27). The former quote discusses the need for migrant labour in the US in the context of a “failure to address the demand side of labor migration” and the subsequent proliferation of a “robust false document industry” serving the symbiotic needs of US employers and migrants who are seeking work (Jordan, 2018c, para. 5). The latter quote is from a Danish mayor lamenting the anti-migration sentiment in his country, demonstrating that the complex relationship between migration and the economy is certainly not unique to the current study’s sample countries. Consistent across this content is the revelation, direct or incidental, that receiving countries both benefit from and strongly rely on migrant labour to fulfill the needs of their economies.

Last, a portion of articles discuss migration’s positive economic impact in terms of actual monetary contribution. For example, a Canadian article, referencing the US, explains that “undocumented immigrants alone contribute more than US\$11-billion each year in tax revenue, [and] US\$300billion [sic] into social security” while a UK article briefly references the fact that “low-skilled immigration may increase GDP” (Markham,

2018, para. 33; Sparrow, 2018b, para. 86). References to dollar values and the monetary impacts of migration were the least prevalent in this analysis. This content may help to solidify the benefits and positive contributions made by migrants to receiving countries' economies; discussing economic value in terms of money may make migrant's contributions less abstract, providing tangible evidence of migration's positive economic impacts. Overall, the discussion of positive migrant economic contribution is in stark contrast to the persistent counter-narrative that is often present in the very same articles: that migrants 'steal' jobs from born citizens and drain a country's fiscal resources.

### ***State interest***

Some of the above-mentioned content is also discussed in the context of serving a *specific* state interest of the receiving country. These articles discuss (a) economic benefits of migration that *mitigate shortcomings* within the receiving country and its born citizen population, as well as (b) the utilization of migration as political leverage for receiving country governments. Within these categories, migration is framed as (i) providing something to the receiving country that it desires and cannot adequately obtain from the current citizen population, or (ii) as something that provides strategic value for political endeavors. In these ways, the benefits of migration are presented as predominantly self-serving for the receiving country.

One such example, from a Canadian article, directly states that Canada's Liberal party "supports high levels of immigration out of self interest" (Ibbitson, 2018b, para. 14). The article goes on to say that "[t]hanks to low birth rates, immigrants are needed to keep the population from going into decline", also expressing that the influx of skilled migrants into Canada is an economic "boon" (Ibbitson, 2018b, para. 14). Another Canadian article discusses a change in the pathway to citizenship for foreign caregivers, emphasizing the need for such migrants to meet certain criteria that have been deemed "key indicators of long-term success in the Canadian labour markets" (Keung, 2018a, para. 25). These 'indicators of success' suggest a desire to select for potential permanent residents of Canada that will be able to contribute economically to a certain standard, benefitting the country in the long term. Two articles from the UK discuss citizens' opinions on whether migration benefits Britain's economy, as well as emphasizing that upcoming immigration reform will meet Britain's needs in terms of

skilled migration (Sparrow, 2018a; Sparrow, 2018b), reiterating the need for migrant economic support discussed above. The discussion from the UK is particularly interesting, as the articles frequently state the need for migrant labour contribution while simultaneously referencing a national desire to restrict migration wherever possible (for often unspecified reasons). In one article, the UK Home Secretary is set to “consider scrapping [the] high skilled migration cap if there are alternative methods of controlling levels of migration” (Sparrow, 2018b, para. 389). This plainly illustrates the contentious relationship the former colonial power has with modern day migration and its struggle to balance its economic needs with a growing populist insularism (Hantzsche et al., 2019; Wood & Ausserladscheider, 2020). Similarly, a US article expresses the indispensable nature of migrants to various industries such as food production, customer service, and infrastructure (Jordan, 2018a), suggesting that born citizen labour is insufficient to meet market demands. Other articles from the US discuss the Military Accessions Vital to National Interests (MAVNI) program, explaining the government’s ongoing need for highly skilled and highly trained migrant military recruits (e.g., Philipps, 2018a; Philipps, 2018b). One US article in particular states that migrant MAVNI recruits “are, on average, better educated, better behaved and better performing than the typical soldier” (Philipps, 2018b, para. 24). This illustrates a credential-based aspect of state interest that involves gaining benefit over and above that which can be found among the born citizen population.

Finally, state interest in migration is also discussed in relation to politics; specifically, the ability for state actors to utilize migration to their benefit within political campaigning and agenda setting. A Canadian article, discussing refugees crossing the Canadian border from the US, states that the Canadian Liberal and Conservative parties each “[seek] to minimize risk while exploiting the political opportunities of the situation”, highlighting the two sides of the migration debate: those who support and those who resist increasing migration (Ibbitson, 2018b, para. 4). Another Canadian article, this time focusing on the US, states that a successful modern day politician must be able to navigate shifting majority populations in order to remain politically relevant; the article gives the example of Hillary Clinton winning the majority vote from Hispanic and Asian-Americans in 2016, giving her (what was then thought to be) a “steadily growing edge over a whiter, older GOP” (Morrow, 2018, para. 12). The same article states that politicians should remain wary of their anti-migrant policy directives, lest they be

“obliter[ated] by demography” (para. 13). A UK article lauds migration’s positive impact on the British economy, but reiterates that migrants are welcome primarily when their skills contribute to the national interest (Walker, 2018c), demonstrating the self-serving populism referenced above. Last, a US article discusses at length the strategies employed by Democrats and Republicans in using migration as a political tool. The article suggests that Republican anti-migration messaging “is far more personal to most voters than the more modulated position of Democrats, whose push to protect the young immigrants... and to ensure humane treatment of undocumented people does not, in many cases, affect voters themselves” (Hirschfeld Davis, 2018c, para. 7). This suggests a keen awareness of the influence held by large voting migrant populations in the US and that the very existence of these migrant populations, including second-generation migrants, can be manipulated to garner support for the Democratic agenda. Additionally, similar to the Canadian perspective, the same article suggests that Republicans ought to be mindful of the shifting demographics of their constituents, and resultant voter influence, when promoting hardline anti-migration policies (see Jones, 2016).

### ***Credentials***

In addition to the economy and state interest, positive discussion of migration occurs in the context of migrant credentials, highlighting the diversity of valuable skills and experience that migrants bring with them to receiving countries. Such value ranges from migrants being generically ‘highly-skilled’ to having specific advanced educations or training in areas such as language and medicine. One Canadian article states that immigrants to Canada are “selected for their education, job skills, ability to speak an official language and ability to integrate quickly” (Ibbitson, 2018b, para. 14). Similarly, two US articles mention that many migrant military applicants “have multiple graduate degrees” and are “recruited... for their language skills or medical training” (Philipps, 2018a, para. 11; Philipps, 2018b, para. 24). The lone UK article in this theme lauds a potential upcoming immigration reform that will privilege prospective migrants with skillsets deemed useful to Britain’s interests (Sparrow, 2018b). This content is indicative of an acknowledgement by receiving countries that many migrants bring advantageous skills and a high degree of potential to their new homes, making them a coveted asset for governments. However, this acknowledgement is often contrasted by social rhetoric proclaiming migrants as coming to a receiving country and ‘stealing’ jobs from the existing population (Frijters et al., 2005).

The contents of this theme illustrate that receiving countries rely on the talent of migrants who leave their countries of origin. Discussing migrant credentials in the news may serve to humanize migrant populations for the general public as it demonstrates their life histories and educational/career attainment prior to relocation. Additionally, this content raises the issue of receiving countries failing to recognize all the qualifications and experiences migrants accumulate outside the receiving country. Many migrants are forced to start over, or suffer significant setbacks in their employability, owing to the lack of recognition of existing accreditation; referred to by some scholars as the “transferability gap”, it is argued that “the focus on immigrant professionals as ‘foreign trained’ devalues their skills and experience as unknown” and allows for “racism against the other [while] unifying the dominant group” (Hawthorne, 2007, p. 10). Last, though this content does speak positively about migrants, its focus on the highly skilled may serve to strengthen the divide between perceived ‘good’ (skilled) and ‘bad’ (unskilled) migrants in the public eye. This may contribute to prejudice toward certain migrant groups and stereotype them as less valuable to a receiving country. Additionally, the aforementioned negative perception of migrants as removing opportunities for born citizens applies to this content as well; perhaps even positive expressions about migrant credentials may serve to alienate those who feel that the existing talent pool is underappreciated or that the government is not investing highly enough in citizen education and career preparation.

### ***Crime reduction***

Migration’s positive effect on crime reduction is also featured within the articles . These articles restate, at length, the various studies that have demonstrated not only a lower rate of offending in migrant populations compared to born citizens, but also the possibility of a relationship between migration and an actual *reduction* in average crime rates. One such article reiterates that researchers “sliced the[ir] data 57 ways to see whether there was anything they missed, but not one of their analyses showed any positive relationship between” immigration and crime; The authors “concluded that not only does... immigration not increase crime, but it *may actually contribute to the drop in overall crime rates observed in the United States in recent decades*” (Ingraham, 2018, para. 11, emphasis added). Key in this theme is the consistent link in each article between this type of information – migration’s positive impact on crime reduction – and the empirical research that backs it. Though the use of scientific research to support

information in the news is positive, this highlights the nevertheless enduring gap between social science findings and the general public's understanding of migration and crime. Much of the public's perception adheres stubbornly to the idea that migration increases crime, despite ongoing research and documentation demonstrating otherwise (Ignatans & Roebuck, 2018; Kremer et al., 2019; Light & Miller, 2018). A better understanding, by the general population and political leaders, of migration's true relationship with criminal offending may alleviate some of the rampant fears around risks to safety and security posed by migration.

## ***Culture***

Articles speaking positively about migration also discuss the perceived cultural benefits of migration, citing an enrichment, strengthening, or revitalization of a communities' cultural life and physical space (e.g., Sparrow, 2018a; Walker, 2018c; Flagg, 2018). One article from the UK reveals how opinion polling has demonstrated that perceptions about the cultural benefits of migration have improved in the British public (Sparrow, 2018a). Another UK article quotes the country's Home Secretary as stating, in defence of his own racist comments, that migration has indeed strengthened the UK culturally (Walker, 2018c). In this latter case, the positive statement about migration was made in order to mitigate the negative nature of a controversial remark and to assure the public that the high-level politician did not intend to implicate all migrants in his comment. Interestingly, all references to cultural benefit in this theme are quite vague; there is little to no specification as to exactly what 'cultural enrichment', 'strengthening', or 'revitalization' looks like or what it entails. In other words, discussion of migrant culture and its positive impacts on receiving countries appears to be included in news stories for ancillary reasons, without specification or elaboration.

### **5.6.2. Overview of Positive Discussion**

Table 13 summarizes key points of discussion from each theme in this analysis.

**Table 13. Overview of thematic content in the positive discussion of migration**

Theme	Summary
<b>Economy</b>	<p>The value of migration to a country's labour market (creating and filling jobs) and taxes/GDP (monetary contribution) are acknowledged.</p> <p>Economic benefits mostly mentioned in passing within a broader topic; Often presented following a negative assertion about migration as a way to refute or balance the negative perspective.</p> <p>Positive discussion about the economy frequently occurs alongside negative discussion: the narrative of migrants 'stealing' jobs and unfairly accessing government subsidies/fiscal resources.</p>
<b>State Interest</b>	<p>Self-interest of the state is presented largely by reiterating economic and political benefits of migration. Sometimes migrant credentials are discussed as fulfilling a state interest.</p> <p>This content highlights the benefits of migration that are lacking, to some extent, within the born citizen population (e.g., migrants filling positions of low-paying physical labour, or large migrant populations providing a strategic advantage to campaigning politicians).</p> <p>Positive discussion tends to occur alongside negative discussion.</p>
<b>Credentials</b>	<p>Highly skilled migrants are discussed as diversifying and supplementing the citizen-born population; illustrates that receiving countries rely on migrants and their talents/skills/knowledge/qualifications.</p> <p>The value of highly skilled migration is emphasized while low-skill migration is devalued.</p> <p>Positive discussion occurs along negative discussion, primarily concerning migrants' dismissal and/or poor treatment notwithstanding the fact that receiving countries rely on their skills.</p>
<b>Crime Reduction</b>	<p>The finding that migration may actually reduce the national crime rate, as well as simply not causing it to increase, is discussed. All discussion makes reference to empirical studies on this topic.</p> <p>This content is typically within articles more focused on dispelling harmful migration myths and utilizing social science research to support claims. There is less focus on negative sentiment or counternarratives, other than addressing the notion that 'migration causes crime'.</p> <p>This discussion highlights the fact that, even in the face of multiple studies, the unfounded fear of migrant crime persists.</p>
<b>Culture</b>	<p>Positive discussion praises migration for providing cultural enrichment to receiving countries. However, the proposed cultural benefits are never described in detail and appear in passing within broader topics.</p>



### **5.6.3. How are Negative Aspects of Migration Framed in Newspaper Articles Containing Migrant Crime?**

In contrast to the positive discussion, negative aspects of migration appear far more frequently – unsurprising given the nature of the original sample – and include migration’s perceived links with crime, threats to societal values, threats to resource distribution, and the notion that migrants obtain employment at the expense of born citizens.

#### ***(i) How are the crime-related negative story elements framed within the broader theme of ‘crime’?***

Articles in this study were known to contain generalized negative discussion of migration and crime, thus the objective of this particular analysis was to assess the different ways migration and crime are discussed negatively. Numerous sub-themes demonstrate many distinct and overlapping manifestations of concern regarding migrant offending.

#### **Failure of state and ‘Over there’**

To begin, several articles discuss migrant crime as a failure of the nation state to adequately protect its citizens from harm. One Canadian article reports entirely on the 2017 mosque shooting in Quebec, Canada, by 28-year-old Alexandre Bissonnette. Bissonnette is interviewed and explains that he felt the Canadian government was endangering his family by welcoming refugees from Muslim-majority countries. He is described as “horrified by Canada’s welcoming” of asylum seekers and “[didn’t] want [Canada] to become like Europe”, referencing the European countries that had recently suffered terrorist attacks by religious extremists (Perreux, 2018, paras. 1,7). Other Canadian articles discuss US concerns surrounding migrant-perpetrated violence, as well as an event in Germany involving refugees “suspected in a knife attack that killed a German man” (Bennhold, 2018b, para. 3). Articles from the UK report primarily on US concerns, with the exception of an article on European off-shore migrant camps. The latter discusses “official fears about migrants”, particularly young men who are seen as “vulnerable to ideologies that are hostile to freedom and/or are prone to turning to crime” (Rankin, 2018, para. 18). This explanation is a clear example of extrapolation and assumptions of risk made about a population, absent any concrete evidence given in the article to rationalize such fear. Last, two US articles discuss numerous iterations of

“deadly immigration loopholes” that have allowed migrants to pose “a grave threat to the United States” (Shear, 2018, para. 2; Shear & Gibbons-Neff, 2018, para. 32). Again, when justification is present at all, it is only individual case accounts that are given as rationale for applying broad brush strokes to migrants as a whole. Various articles also discuss US President Trump’s criticism of US “sanctuary cities of death” and repeat claims that “Democrats had opened the gates to citizenship for criminals as a way to expand the ranks of Democratic voters” at the expense of citizen safety (e.g., Freed Wessler, 2018, para. 21; Hirschfeld Davis, 2018c, para. 11), implying a broad failure to uphold the duty to keep Americans safe.

Some articles make direct reference to migrant crime occurring in other areas of the world, emphasizing a desire by the receiving country to avoid enduring a similar problem ‘at home’. This discussion implies that certain crimes can be avoided through the restriction and exclusion of migrants. An article from Canada discusses US President Trump’s anti-migration rhetoric and his specific attacks against Latin American migrants, quoting him as asking whether “anyone [has] been looking at the Crime [sic] taking place south of the border?” (Colvin & Lucey, 2018, para. 10). Additionally, an article on the Quebec mosque shooting in Canada quotes shooter Bissonnette lamenting the terrorism in Western Europe, saying

I saw that and, you know, they're going to kill my parents, my family, me, too. I had to do something, I couldn't do nothing. It was something that tortured me...*I didn't want it to come here* (Perreux, 2018, paras. 7-8, emphasis added).

Two articles from the UK reference accusations that “[m]ulticulturalism could make [the] UK a ‘crime-riddled cesspool’” and include inflammatory statements by high-profile politicians stating that young male migrants “from overseas” are “the most dangerous thing human evolution has produced” (Oliver, 2018, para. 2; Sabbagh, 2018, para. 1). An article from the US likewise mentions “the dangers of immigration in Europe” and states that “Europe is waking up [to this danger]... Will America... In time?” (Stolberg, 2018b, para. 8, ellipses in original). Another US article reiterates President Trump’s declaration that “Mexico is having a tremendous problem with crime, and we want to keep it out of [the US]” (Stolberg, 2018a, para. 11). The general spirit of this thematic content can be summarized by a final Canadian article:

This xenophobic, anti-immigration scourge isn't particular to the Trump administration, but rather is afflicting the entire world. Leaders and would-be leaders from Turkey to Norway to France to Denmark to Brazil... have campaigned on a platform of nativism and have fomented fear of the *encroaching army of others, often darker-skinned people, coming to destroy* a longheld [sic] way of life (Markham, 2018, para 62, emphasis added).

The above quote illustrates the perception of (non-white) migrants all over the world as a threat to other countries' safety, norms, and comforts.

### **Borders, Drugs, and Gangs**

Another prominent manifestation of concern, and an extension of the perceived failure of the State to properly protect its citizens, involves an emphasis on borders and border security. Multiple Canadian articles reference rhetoric from the US that implies an open border “breeds horrible crime”, the influx of migration in Europe can be explained by a lack of “strong borders and extreme vetting”, and a need to allow citizens to “feel safe at the border” (Colvin & Long, 2018, para. 11; Dale, 2018b, para. 22; Saunders, 2018, para. 5). Several articles also place blame on ‘open borders’ for allowing a flow of gang members and drugs into “vulnerable communities” (e.g., Dale, 2018a, para. 12). Some articles from the UK discuss border vulnerability in Europe, though most reference the same rhetoric from within the US as the above Canadian articles. The UK articles which discuss border issues in Europe implicate “weaknesses in the fields of external border protection” that allow for an influx of “lone, poorly educated young men” who may pose a criminal threat to receiving countries (Rankin, 2018, para. 18) as well as the suggestion that city-centre terrorist activity could be prevented by “[securing] European borders [to] keep Europe safe” (Walker, 2018a, para. 18). The remaining articles reference US President Trump’s vows to strengthen the US border, prevent illegal immigration and subsequent migrant-perpetrated crime, and the President’s insistence that the American judiciary avoid “[legislating] security and safety at the border, or anywhere else” as they “know nothing about it and are making [the country] unsafe” (e.g., Pengelly, 2018, para. 14; Blakely, 2018; Deng, 2018). Articles from the US exclusively cover issues of border security within the US itself, with a heavy emphasis on the threat of crime posed by illegal immigration from Mexico. Discrediting of the Democratic party takes place in accusations of “open border extreme[ism]” along with statements of “to hell with political correctness” in regards to desiring new political players who will “make [the US] safer and secure [its] borders” from unwelcome

migration (Hirschfeld Davis, 2018b, para. 11; Vogel & Rogers, 2018, para. 14). Many US articles reference “dangerous” and “violent” migrants “clamoring to breach the country’s borders”, emphasizing the need for a “physical border wall” in order to stem the tide of criminals “flowing across the border” and causing suffering for American citizens (e.g., Hirschfeld Davis, 2018a, para. 1; Jordan, 2018b, para. 7; Robbins & Shear, 2018, para. 2; Stolberg, 2018a, para. 11).

Closely related to the discussion of borders, migrant crime is also discussed in the context of drugs and gang activity. Drugs are discussed as being brought into receiving countries by migrants, along with the inherent dangers posed by the importation of illicit substances. Two Canadian articles cover rhetoric from the US stating that “open borders have allowed drugs... to pour into [the] most vulnerable communities” and that these communities are being “destroyed by the illegal drugs coming across the border with Mexico” (Dale, 2018a, para. 12; Morrow, 2018, para. 4). The lone UK article in this sub-theme states that “Brexit could lead to an increase in undocumented migrants which could fuel... drug importation” (Kenber, 2018, para. 5). Articles from the US include criticism of Oakland, California and Lawrence, Massachusetts (sanctuary cities) for creating “breeding grounds for drugs and crime brought by immigrants” as well as promoting the need for a border wall to “keep out deadly drug dealers” from Mexico (e.g., Flagg, 2018, para. 10; Stolberg, 2018a, para. 11).

Regarding gang activity, Canadian articles almost exclusively reference US rhetoric around the risk of gang violence posed by immigration. These articles discuss the “casting [of] migrants as affiliated with the notorious MS-13 and other gangs” and how the Trump administration has made migrant gang members “a stand-in for all immigrants”; additionally, these articles reference “the outcry for the killings and crime being caused by gangs and thugs” and Latin American migrant caravans containing “500 criminals and gang members” moving toward the US (e.g., Colvin, 2018, para. 11; Colvin & Lucey, 2018, para. 3; Lemire & Colvin, 2018, para. 12; Markham, 2018, para. 16). One Canadian article also briefly references criminal gangs in Europe associated with racial and religious minority residents (Saunders, 2018). Articles from the UK also almost exclusively report on events in the US, with the exception of a single article commenting on the UK Home Secretary’s controversial comments regarding a local racially distinct child grooming gang (Walker, 2018c). Other UK articles repeat the rhetoric from within the US around gang violence and its perceived link with immigration, including reference

to political “attack ads flash[ing] images of tattooed gang members behind prison bars while accusing Democratic incumbents of failing to secure America’s borders” (e.g., Siddiqui, 2018, para. 5). Last, US articles report entirely on gang related content relevant to the US itself. These articles include reference to school-age migrants who are at risk of becoming involved with the MS-13 gang on Long Island, New York, repeating suggestions that “the vast majority of immigrants flowing into the United States from Mexico are members of the brutal gang” (e.g., Robbins & Shear, 2018, para. 10; Fortin et al., 2018). Another dominant element of migrant gang discussion in the US centers around the families of children who have been killed by migrant gang members (e.g., Fortin et al., 2018; Robbins & Shear, 2018; Wang, 2018b). President Trump has dubbed such people his ‘Angel families’ (Arellano, 2018).

### **Crime (generic or other) and Homicide**

Discussion of generic or ‘other’ crime encapsulates all non-specific linkage of migration to crime (i.e., not specifying any particular type of crime or criminal event, only ‘crime’). This content also captures the limited mention of all crime ‘other’ than homicide, sexual assault, terrorism, gang, and drug offences. This represents the largest sub-theme in the analysis. The prominence of this content is important as the largely non-specific reference to crime as a pervasive motif in articles discussing migration may indicate a tendency for the media to loosely group ‘crime’ and ‘migration’ without adequately explaining the parameters, definitions, or realities of the pairing. This may foster an association between the two that leaves room for harmful assumptions and speculations about migrant criminality. Some examples of generic references to crime include the aforementioned discussion of open borders breeding “horrible crime”, migrants referred to as “criminals looking to wreak havoc”, asylum seekers committing “very serious criminal offences”, fears of a migrant “crime wave”, and stating that politicians who are opposed to border restriction “just don’t mind crime” (Charter, 2018c; Colvin & Long, 2018, para. 11; Hirschfeld Davis, 2018b, para. 16; Markham, 2018, para. 33; Taylor, 2018, para. 9, headline).

Last, some of the articles discuss ‘other’ crime categories as they relate to migration, including “gambling, kidnapping, smuggling, and vagrancy”, aggravated assault, rioting, burglary, gun violence, robbery, and fraud (e.g., Ingraham, 2018, para. 6; Colvin, 2018; Erlanger & Anderson, 2018; Freed Wessler, 2018; Martin & Fausset,

2018; Nagourney & Arango, 2018). Despite frequent mention of interpersonal and violent crime, it has been determined that, if anything, migrants are more likely to commit property offences than violent crime (Spenkuch, 2014).

Several articles include discussion of migrant-perpetrated homicide. All but three Canadian articles reference events occurring in the US; the remaining three discuss the murder of a German man at the hands of asylum seekers from the Middle East, the mosque shooting in Quebec, and the murder of a British Columbian child, Marrisa Shen (Bennhold, 2018b; Perreux, 2018; Vikander, 2018). Articles from the UK represent a mix of discussion from the US and Europe that includes reference to “an illegal immigrant jailed for murdering two sheriff’s deputies in 2014” in the US and “an Afghan migrant [who] was arrested on suspicion of murdering his 16-year-old girlfriend” in Austria, triggering calls for “refugees to be subjected to an 8pm curfew” (Charter, 2018d, para. 9; Moody, 2018, para. 1). Another UK article quotes a German radio talk-show in reference to the murder of a 14-year-old girl, asking “[t]o what extent is it possible to integrate young men who have fled from war and archaic societies? How unsafe is Germany as a result of them?” (Connolly, 2018, para. 9). Of the US articles, all but one reference the deaths of US citizens at the hands of (mostly undocumented) migrants. There is extensive reference to the “angel families” of murdered children (e.g., Vogel & Rogers, 2018, para. 1); in particular, the death of a young female jogger, Mollie Tibbetts, is covered in the context of “whether immigrants commit more crime” than born citizens (Piquero, 2018, para. 1). Additionally, the deaths of two school-age girls targeted in an MS-13 gang killing are presented as the “flash point for the Trump administration’s crackdown on illegal immigrants” (e.g., Fortin et al., 2018, para. 17).

### **“Rapists and criminals” and Sexual assault**

A number of articles from each country make direct reference to US President Trump’s infamous “rapists and criminals” comment regarding Mexican migrants. Many articles discuss various iterations of the remark that originated from the President’s proclamation of “Mexican immigrants as criminals and ‘rapists’ at his first campaign event” (e.g., Anthony et al., 2018, para. 38). Iterations include subtle variations in the remark, such as some articles referring to “criminals and rapists”, rapists and “killers”, or “rapists and murderers” (Goodstein, 2018, para. 8; Hirschfeld Davis, 2018b, para. 7; Siddiqui, 2018, para. 15). Additional articles make a more general reference to sexual

assault in the context of migration. For example, certain articles reference instances of migrant-perpetrated rape in Germany, the rape of a young child by an undocumented immigrant in the US, and the 2016 New Year's Eve incident in Cologne, France where "hundreds of sexual assaults" were allegedly "carried out by men of North African appearance, leading campaigners to demonise [sic] refugees as 'rapefugees'" (e.g., Charter, 2018c, para. 4; Connolly, 2018; Hirschfeld Davis, 2018c; Oliver, 2018). Additionally, a UK article explains that

[o]verall, violent crime [in Germany] was down by 1.7 per cent last year... although *refugees and asylum seekers were proportionately over-represented in sexual assault cases*. (para. 5, emphasis added).

Further, the UK home secretary states that "any normal person looking at the recent convictions of gangs that abuse children [in the UK] would have noticed that a vast majority are from a Pakistani heritage and we cannot ignore that" (Walker, 2018c, para. 9), implicating migrants of a particular ethnic origin in the perpetration of sexual crime.

### **Race or religion and Refugees/asylum seekers**

In keeping with the UK Home Secretary's above comment, another large collection of articles contains direct discussion of migrant race or religion, particularly concerning Latin American or Muslim migrants. These articles report on an array of topics relating to migration and crime, but share the common practice of highlighting a particular racial or religious affiliation in regards to the alleged offending. Three Canadian articles give the nationalities of two murder suspects in a knife attack in Germany – "an Iraqi and a Syrian" – as well as making reference to "terrorist acts being committed by Muslims" and fears "that accepting immigrants and refugees from Muslim countries increases the risks of domestic terrorism" (Bencherki & Basque, 2018, para. 13; Bennhold, 2018b, para. 3; Ibbitson, 2018b, para. 6). Two articles from the UK illustrate a heavy focus on keeping Britain safe from terrorism by "revoking Muslim immigration" and not allowing "immigrants to bring their countries' cultural problems with them" to the UK (Sabbagh, 2018, para. 3; Walker, 2018a, para. 18;). Last, US articles frequently discuss the omnipresent negative racial rhetoric around migrants, highlighting the Trump administration's "railing against... immigrants from Latin America, often characterizing them as criminals" (e.g., Jordan, 2018b, para. 4).

Many articles also contain specific discussion of refugees and asylum seekers. This content highlights the impact of certain migration statuses and perceptions of their criminality. The specific identification of refugees/asylum seekers in articles is important as it may serve to create an association between those seeking refuge, an especially vulnerable population, and the dangers of crime. A Canadian article discusses the refugee-perpetrated murder of 13-year-old Marrisa Shen in British Columbia, Canada, and states of her vigil that “some were also there to protest the country’s immigration policies, prompted by the fact that the accused is a refugee” (Vikander, 2018, para. 9). In the same article, another vigil attendee expresses their opinion that “[s]ome refugees are innocent, but there are some who are not... They might have extremist ideology or behaviour [and] [t]hey should not be let into the community” (para. 20). Two other Canadian articles highlight the migration status of Middle Eastern asylum seekers who committed a fatal assault in Germany, as well as the frequently discussed “very bad thugs” allegedly comprising the caravan of Latin American would-be refugee claimants approaching the US (Dale, 2018e, para. 48; Bennhold, 2018b). An article from the UK discusses activity in Germany, specifically a German talk show that was forced to backtrack after airing a controversial segment on the dangers of integrating asylum seekers, stating that the show “rejected the accusation that they had unfairly labelled all refugees as dangerous” (Connolly, 2018, para. 12). Another UK article presents the fact that Germany “recorded an almost 10 per cent drop in crime...to its lowest level since the early 1990s despite perceptions that the arrival of more than a million asylum seekers would lead to a rise in crime” (Charter, 2018c, para. 1). Last, in contrast to the previous article, yet another story mentions German Chancellor Angela Merkel’s apparent “glossing over [of] terrorism, crime, and costs caused by the influx of more than a million asylum seekers” into the country (Charter, 2018b, para. 3). Articles from the US also discuss the situation in Germany, referencing “far-right politicians [who] have seized on violent crimes” committed by “refugees from the Middle East and Africa” and the “diffuse sense of fear” in the country brought on by “an increase in refugees” (e.g., Bennhold, 2018a, para. 2; Eddy et al., 2018, para. 10).

### **Terrorism and Wolf in sheep’s clothing**

Closely linked with the discussion of refugees and asylum seekers, articles also discuss the threat, risk, and fear of migrant perpetrated terrorism. Certain Canadian articles continue to reference the Quebec mosque shooting and attacker Bissonnette’s



fears that accepting refugees would raise the risk of terrorism in Canada. Two other articles from Canada discuss the murder of Murrissa Shen, quoting citizens' fears that refugees will bring with them "extremist ideology or behaviour", and a Canadian school administrator in Ontario who was chastised for publicly questioning "bringing refugees to Canada, given their 'terrorist sympathies'" (Rushowy & Javed, 2018, para. 17; Vikander, 2018, para. 20). A UK article highlights fears over migrant-perpetrated terrorism in Austria following a series of unrelated knife attacks by racial minorities, stating that "Austria has been on alert for a terrorist incident and... [the] government has vowed to tighten entry procedures for migrants after an election campaign...that was dominated by fears of immigration" (Charter, 2018a, paras. 8-9). Two articles from the US quote President Trump as stating that US border agents "regularly stop potential terrorists", while another Republican suggests that "[t]here could be members of ISIS" in the caravan of Latin American asylum seekers en route to the US (Fritze & Schnaars, 2018, para. 6; Wang, 2018a, para. 17).

A relatively small number of articles discuss the notion of migrants, particularly refugees, as 'wolves in sheep's clothing'; in essence, explaining that migrants may be intentionally 'infiltrating' receiving countries in order "to get close to us, and, at an opportune moment, to hit us" (e.g., Bilefsky, 2018, para. 18). This content includes a great deal of overlap with other content in the analysis and highlights a particular intersection between migration, fear of terrorism, and Islam. Some articles again reference the Quebec mosque shooting and concerns that refugees from Muslim majority countries would enter Canada specifically to commit acts of terror (e.g., Perreault, 2018). This is part of a repeated narrative of concern that Muslim refugees will increase the risk of terrorism in a receiving country. This negative association between Muslim migrants and violent criminal offending/terrorism has contributed to hate crime directed at minority community members in Canada, such as the Quebec mosque shooting and various instances of mosque vandalism in the country (CJPME, 2018), the impetus for Brexit (Swami et al., 2018), and discriminatory policies in the US such as the ban on entry from several Muslim majority countries (Ibe, 2020). In the US in particular, the idea that migrants are entering the country with ulterior motives has even led to the "cast[ing of] naturalized citizens as suspects for fraud" (Freed Wessler, 2018, para. 18). Accusations of citizenship fraud can have dire consequences for settled migrants, at times leading to the highly controversial practice of denaturalization (or revocation of

citizenship) – a process whereby an immigrant who has become a citizen “can have that status taken away if the federal government proves by clear, convincing, and unequivocal evidence in a civil federal court proceeding, or satisfies the beyond a reasonable doubt standard in a comparable criminal case, that the citizen was not qualified for naturalization at the time it was mistakenly granted” (ILRS, 2020, p. 2; see also Allard, 2014; Weil & Handler, 2018).

## **Undocumented and Manipulation**

Articles also discuss concerns around migration and crime specifically related to irregular/undocumented migrants. A Canadian article highlights the idea that “[t]he Trump administration’s hard-line immigration policies are predicated, in part, upon the notion that immigrants who are in the country illegally represent a threat to public safety” (Ingraham, 2018, para. 1). This quote illustrates the pattern of high-ranking officials in the US “emphasiz[ing] criminal offences committed by illegal immigrants” to further an anti-migration agenda, including an incident where the death of a border patrol agent was immediately capitalized upon by US President Trump, who “did not wait for any evidence of homicide before he suggested the agent was murdered by illegal immigrants” (Dale, 2018a, para. 11; Dale, 2018b, para. 1). Several articles from the UK also discuss the ongoing tensions around undocumented migration in the US. One such article quotes President Trump as lamenting the death of a professional athlete killed by a twice-deported undocumented immigrant, stating “[t]his is just one of many such preventable tragedies... we must get the Dems to get tough on the Border [sic], and with illegal immigration, FAST” (Deng, 2018, para. 5). This sentiment – the preventability of tragedy – is a direct illustration of the notion of “extraneous crime” which leads to social anxieties around migrant-perpetrated wrongdoing in society (Sohoni & Sohoni, 2014, p. 58). Another UK article explains the rhetoric around ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) in the US, and how it is “tasked with apprehending, detaining and deporting undocumented immigrants, *as the last line of defense between Americans and violent criminals*” (Siddiqui, 2018, para. 7, emphasis added). Unsurprisingly, many articles from the US discuss undocumented migration into the country and the concerns touted by the Trump administration. Such concerns frequently include the “repeated claims that illegal immigrants bring crime into the United States” (e.g., Romero, 2018, para. 11). One US article makes reference to “Aviac”, a group comprising “Advocates for Victims of Illegal Alien Crime” whose purpose is to support the “families hurt by crimes

perpetrated by undocumented immigrants” (Vogel & Rogers, 2018, paras. 22, 23). President Trump enlists these ‘Angel’ families to defend his harsh family separation policies, stating that the family members of these crime victims are “permanently separated” from their loved ones (para. 6). A US article also references support from religious leaders for Trump’s measures against undocumented migration, quoting one pastor as saying that the separation of migrant families was gut-wrenching, but “it was more gut-wrenching to see immigrants enter the country illegally and harm or kill Americans” (Dias, 2018, para. 7). Such generalizations, ultimately misinformed, are likely a result of high-profile negative rhetoric working against the “statistics undermining [Trump’s] argument that unauthorized immigration leads to increases in crime” (Vogel & Rogers, 2018, para. 4).

A number of articles also highlight the intentional government and media manipulation used to purposefully associate migrants with crime. A Canadian article describes US President Trump’s “dramatic reading of the lyrics to ‘The Snake’, a song he uses as an allegory for how dangerous immigrants are” (Dale, 2018c, para. 4). Two other Canadian articles discuss the history of political strategies that serve to “galvanize [citizens] around a common enemy when instructed to do so by autocratic leaders”, and point to Trump’s attempts to “scare some segment of voters into believing immigrants are threats” (Dale, 2018d, para. 8; Markham, 2018, para. 10). Additionally, yet another article describes how “[b]oth Democrats and Republicans have denounced [an] ad, which links [a migrant’s] crimes to a caravan of Central American migrants”, describing the ad as “a racist campaign tactic” (Billeaud, 2018, para. 7). One article from the UK describes politicians “scapegoating asylum seekers” in their justification for refusing to house asylum seekers in certain parts of the country (Taylor, 2018, para. 13). Another UK article discusses Trump and his “expound[ing of] conspiracy theories about migrants and rape” and other Republican-supported political advertisements utilizing “a messaging strategy rooted in painting a dark portrait of immigrants, with a fixation on violence and crime” (Siddiqui, 2018, para. 10). Last, multiple US articles themselves continue to highlight how “Republican attacks use misleading language and employ overblown claims about the dangers of immigrants”, including “portraying [the gang] MS-13 as more of a national, pervasive threat than authorities say it is” (e.g., Ferre-Sadurni & Robbins, 2018, para. 12; Hirschfeld Davis, 2018c, para. 5).

This crime-related content demonstrates a vast and imaginative array of concerns regarding migration's impact on a receiving country's safety and security. The inclusion of such discussion in the news indicates the prevalence with which these notions and corresponding sentiment exist within not only the general public, but the upper echelons of politics and government. However, it is critical to note that this content is seldom presented as the opinion of the journalist and is far more often given as an example of a politician, organization, or average citizen's opinion on migration and crime, thus creating space for critical thinkers to separate the negative rhetoric from declarations of fact.

***(ii) How are the non-crime negative story elements framed?***

In addition to crime related negative discussion, several articles also illustrated a perceived risk to societal and community values, access to state resources, and employment.

**Values**

A Canadian article references a fear of the 'Other', described as "the stranger who threatens traditional values and ways of living" (Ibbitson, 2018b, para. 7). This article goes on to state that some Canadians are "concerned that excessive immigration could undermine [their] values" (para. 12) while another article explains that many people believe "growing ethnic diversity inevitably erodes civic trust and support for social programs, because we don't want our tax money going to people not like us" (Saunders, 2018, para. 7). Yet another Canadian article draws attention to the Canadian Conservative party by highlighting their "barbaric cultural practices hotline" and "proposed values test for prospective citizens" (Ibbitson, 2018b, para. 11). A UK article cites "concerns around social cohesion" as justification to refuse social housing to asylum seekers in the north-east of England (Taylor, 2018, para. 5). Another UK article covers the controversy around a London mayoral candidate's criticism of ethnic minority migrants, quoting him as saying that accommodating such people "robs Britain of its community", allowing "people to come to Britain and bring their culture, their country, and any problems they might have, with them" (Sabbagh, 2018, para. 6). This mayoral candidate also connects shared values with shared religion as he further laments that "without the sense of community that comes from shared Christian celebrations, Britain had produced a nation of people who would not fight for the country" (para. 8). An article

from the US also reports on events in Europe, quoting a German citizen as describing “women with face veils crossing the street with no regard for traffic” and opining that “[his] city was changing and that there were ‘more and more of them coming’” (Bennhold, 2018c, para. 30). Regarding the situation in the US itself, another article references migrants as posing an “‘existential threat’ that will change the face of Arizona and the country, hampering school integration ‘because there aren’t enough white kids to go around’” (Stolberg, 2018b, para. 12). This same article highlights a Republican state representative declaring that “[w]e can’t restore our civilization with somebody else’s babies” (para. 16). Another article describes the experience of an undocumented migrant worker at one of US President Trump’s resorts, explaining that her supervisor would degrade her and other workers by telling them not to speak their native language (Jordan, 2018b, para. 8).

## **Resources**

Some articles contain negative discussion of migration in the context of national resources (such as subsidies, welfare, etc.). A Canadian article criticizes the Conservative party for facilitating the idea that “[d]ark migrants are coming here because Canada is rich” while another references Ontario Premier Doug Ford as “waging a war with the Liberals over the cost of accommodating all [the] new arrivals” (Ibbitson, 2018b, para. 13; Mallick, 2018, para. 19). Another Canadian article discusses the anti-refugee sentiment in Toronto, Canada, citing “concerns of irregular migrants flooding the city’s shelter system” and receiving “free money” from the government (Keung, 2018b, paras. 16, 21). Yet another Canadian article also reports on a similar sentiment occurring in the US where citizens are expressing contempt for leftist politicians who are “‘putting illegals ahead of American citizens’ and giving undocumented immigrants ‘free tuition’” (Morrow, 2018, para. 21). Articles from the UK and US contain more of the same, describing the German government facing accusations of “funding migrants at the expense of poorer Germans” and American citizens as being “tired of all the handouts” (e.g., Arango & Nagourney, 2018, para. 25; Charter, 2018b, para. 1). One article from the UK offers an explanation for such resentment, stating that an empirical study had found that “opposition to immigration and multiculturalism correlate[es] closely with socio-economic deprivation” and that “people in deprived communities often saw immigration as part of ‘a broader story about dissatisfaction with their own lives’” (Walker, 2018b, paras. 4, 16).

## **Jobs**

Last, articles contain negative discussion of migration relating to employment in receiving countries. Canadian articles reference the political right who “believe that Canada’s policy of accepting large numbers of immigrants results in newcomers taking scarce jobs from the native-born”, a sentiment repeated about the UK and US, where the “[US] President’s coalition is rooted in racial resentment toward illegal Latino immigrants allegedly stealing jobs, toward foreign workers competing with American workers” and where prospective immigrants to the UK will be required to prove they will not be competing with the citizen work force (e.g., Ibbitson, 2018a, para. 12; Ibbitson, 2018b, para. 6; Sparrow, 2018b).

The content in the above three themes reflects a resistance to difference and illustrates the hostility that is often levied at migrant populations in receiving countries for a variety of reasons unrelated to a perceived risk of crime. Issues of racism and xenophobia underly such sentiment and ultimately hinder the tolerance and inclusivity necessary to the functioning of increasingly diverse societies. As with the crime-related content, discussion of migrant threats to values, resources, and jobs are seldom without context that allows for a counter-narrative and separation of opinion from fact.

#### 5.6.4. Overview of Negative Discussion

Table 14 summarizes key points of discussion from each theme in this analysis.

**Table 14. Overview of thematic content in the negative discussion of migration**

Theme	Summary
<b>Links with Crime</b>	<p>Fifteen sub-themes demonstrate a wide variety of manifestations of concern for migrant crime. Sub-theme content frequently overlaps and, as such, indicates the complex nature of migration's perceived relationship with crime and safety concerns.</p> <p>The multiplicity with which migrant crime is framed (e.g., as a failure of government to protect its citizens; as 'imported' crime from dangerous parts of the world; as heavily linked to sexual offending or gang violence or drugs) highlights the wide-spread nature of prejudice against migrants.</p> <p>The majority of articles are restating opinions of politicians, members or the far-right, religious organizations, or average citizens who oppose migration, and many articles also contain more objective information that is used to counterbalance the negative assertions. However, even in articles containing counter-narratives: (a) rarely is significant space given to dispelling the harmful speculation about migrant crime, (b) nor is the speculative/generalized negative content specifically discussed as being hypothetical in nature.</p>
<b>Values</b>	<p>Canadian, British, and American values are described as threatened by migration. Migrants are described as bringing their problems with them from other countries, eroding the sense of community, and posing an existential threat owing to the pushing out of white citizens.</p> <p>Some articles also contain counter-narratives describing the irrationality of the above sentiment. However, the focus is primarily on quoting or restating the controversial views of anti-migration stakeholders (e.g., politicians, voters).</p>
<b>Resources</b>	<p>Migration is criticized for depleting government resources at the expense of born citizens. Many citizens are quoted as feeling abandoned and unprioritized by their countries.</p> <p>Some articles counter with information regarding migration's positive impact on the economy, while others explain sociological reasons why certain people may feel threatened by migration (i.e., the lower socioeconomic class of born citizens).</p>
<b>Jobs</b>	<p>Similar to resources, migration is demonized for taking employment opportunities away from born citizens. Expressions of citizen resentment is frequent, and this is capitalized upon by political agents looking to push an anti-migration agenda.</p> <p>Some articles counter with positive discussion of migration's impact on the economy.</p>

## 5.7. Conclusion

For the qualitative portion of this study, thematic content analysis was employed to explore the positive and negative discussion of migration within articles containing migrant crime.

Some articles were found to contain discussion of positive aspects of migration. This positive discussion includes migration's impact on the economy, migration's role in fulfilling a state interest, migrants' many credentials and other qualifications, migration's effect on crime reduction, and migration's cultural benefits. However, articles also frequently contain myriad negative expressions of migration, including a perceived link to crime (and the numerous manifestations of this perceived link), as well as migration's alleged threat to receiving countries' values, resources, and citizen job opportunities.

Of note, the majority of articles in this study do not present the negative discussion of migration as fact – rather, most articles are presenting, restating, or emphasizing narratives used by third parties who have taken a negative approach to the issue of migrant crime. This third-party expression is important as it indicates that despite the multitudinous harmful information *present* in news media, it is not necessarily presented without caveat or context; this may allow space for critical interpretation of the material. Nonetheless, qualitative analysis gives insight into the current media narrative on positive aspects of migration, while simultaneously highlighting the variety of ways that migration is negatively discussed and presented in the news.

### 5.7.1. Limitations

There are limitations specific to the qualitative portion of this study. First, some themes in this analysis were based on existing categorizations of migrant media representation; however, interpretation of existing themes and their application to the current sample begets a degree of subjectivity. Similarly, other themes emerged from the sample itself and are thus based on an interpretation of this specific dataset, making them inherently more subjective in nature. Last, a larger or more diverse sample may have revealed additional themes of interest in the discussion of positive and negative aspects of migration. Additional limitations relevant to the overall study are discussed in the following chapter.



## Chapter 6. Overall Conclusion

### 6.1. Summary

This study explored the relationship between story elements and article characteristics and hypothetical discussion of migrant crime, as well as the impact of these elements and characteristics on article prominence (word count). Additionally, this study looked in-depth at the context and framing of positive and negative discussion of migration. A total of 225 articles – 75 from each country – were sampled and coded quantitatively to reflect recurring points of interest in the presentation of migrant crime. Following quantitative coding, articles were qualitatively sorted and thematically coded for broad positive discussion ( $n = 17$ ) and broad negative discussion ( $n = 106$ ) of migration.

This study is positioned in a time of rapid and highly accessible communication of information, coinciding with salient human displacement and various ‘migration crises’ occurring around the world. Moreover, these issues are heightened by a nativist populism that is awakening in many countries, including traditionally more tolerant and inclusive nations. For these reasons, studying media representation of migration is not only topical academically, but important to the understanding of ongoing social and political functioning, and the state of human rights in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. Key points from the current study are summarized below:

- Having migration status mentioned in an article headline is marginally predictive of hypothetical discussion of migrant crime.
- The inclusion of positive discussion of migration in an article, as well as mention of Islam, violent crime, or a focus on events occurring in the US are all predictive of hypothetical discussion of migrant crime.
- Having crime in the article headline, including a direct quote from a migrant individual in the article, or mentioning migration detention are all associated with the absence of hypothetical discussion of migrant crime.
- Articles produced in the US, or that include migrant race, property crime, a direct quote from a migrant individual, or discussion of migration detention are associated with a higher article word count.
- Articles produced in Canada or the UK, or that include migration status and/or crime in the article headline, are associated with a lower article word count.

- Positive general discussion of migration within this sample focuses on economics, state interest, migrant skills and qualifications, crime reduction, and the cultural benefits of migration for the receiving country.
- Negative general discussion of migration within these articles includes diverse illustrations of migration's perceived link with crime, as well as perceptions of migrants as threats to receiving country values, resources, and job availability.
- Largely, when presenting information on migration and/or migrants, articles repeat rhetoric and narratives from third parties.

Owing to the media's enduring and important role in the provision of information and its potential to influence formative societal and political processes, article content such as the subject of this study should be monitored and assessed for its composition and continuing and/or changing impacts.

### **6.1.1. The Role and Responsibility of the Media**

Many scholars and organizations identify the need for increased accountability in migration-related journalism (CCME & WACC Europe, 2017; Christoph 2012, Hoewe, 2018). Suggestions include more effort to avoid “[d]iscriminating portrayals and stereotyping”, and well as increased reporting on migrant successes and migrant collaborations with nationals within receiving societies (Christoph, 2012, p. 102). One of the more direct and foundational ways to achieve better representation of migrants in news media is to include more “members of minority groups as journalists, news presenters, moderators, or editors” so that they may “emanate diversity to the outside and contribute additional and different perspectives to news coverage” (p. 102). In this way, a check-and-balance is in place at an earlier stage of news production, and unnecessary media emphasis, stereotyping, or content can be curtailed while more constructive and positive narratives can be worked into the public conscience.

Identifying story elements and article characteristics associated with potentially harmful speculation or generalizations – or, at the very least, a retelling of these harmful narratives – can provide a starting point for some critical self-reflection on the part of news producing agencies and actors. For example, if Muslim or undocumented migrants are more likely to be the subject of hypothetical discussion in articles covering migration and crime, a pause should be taken to question whether the story content is (a) outright

biased, or (b) given without an adequate caveat that may serve to mitigate any harmful effects (Ramasubramanian, 2007).

Similarly, noting which aspects of migration/crime reporting are associated with article prominence – e.g., migration status in the headline or mention of migration detention – can allow for an assessment of why certain elements and characteristics are more likely to appear in a shorter or longer article, impacting prominence and potential salience for news consumers.

In essence, tools at the disposal of journalists and publications can be applied for a betterment of journalistic integrity and an increase in accountability for the effects of media production (CCME & WACC Europe, 2017; Christoph, 2012; Hoewe, 2018).

## **6.2. Limitations**

There are several limitations of the current study, in addition to the previous standalone limitations for each of the quantitative and qualitative portions. First, this research does not aim to compare the coverage of migrant-related crime to any other type of coverage. In other words, this study does not speak to the potential differences between stories about migrant crime and stories about migration more generally, nor does it compare migrant-related crime coverage to non-migrant-related crime coverage. While these are important comparisons to make, the current study simply aims to establish an overview of the composition of news stories containing discussion of migrant crime.

Second, the sample does not include televised news, internet-based sources of information – such as blogs or social media – or other forms of publication such as books, movies, or television. The sample represents six newspapers, two from each country, and is therefore not a comprehensive illustration of the respective national narratives. Similarly, the articles are limited to stories that these six newspapers' producers chose to report. Because the sample newspapers were selected based on circulation, they do not represent the full range of stories present in each country's news cycle (e.g., for the Canadian sources, the study uses a national newspaper and a Toronto-based newspaper; this necessarily limits the breadth and depth of certain

stories that may have been covered in more detail and/or with more frequency in other regions of the country).

Third, the sample newspapers are all similar in their position on the political spectrum – close to centre; Looking at newspapers from further to the left or right would undoubtedly yield different patterns and frequencies of information in the reporting of migrant crime.

Fourth, also in regard to the sample, the choice to focus on Canada, the UK, and the US – three countries with a number of significant similarities in political and media structure – precludes an examination of other areas of the world and their media's relationship with migrant crime; greater contrast in reporting practices may have been found in other areas of the world, potentially illuminating further significant components of migrant crime news in specific countries.

Last, the primary goal of this research is to provide insight into (a) whether certain article content or characteristics are associated with hypothetical discussion of migrant crime, or article prominence, and (b) the context within which positive and negative discussion of migration is occurring and how it is framed. This study does not assess whether or to what extent the content is balanced or countered by additional information within the articles. Therefore, “assumptions concerning media effects” cannot be made for this particular sample (Dowler et al., 2006, p. 843), beyond support from the literature for what is typically an undesirable relationship between media coverage and the tangible impacts on migrants in society.

### **6.3. Future Directions**

The context and overall tone of an article is of crucial importance in determining the potential impact of hypothetical and negative migration-related content in news media. In their 2010 content analysis of newspaper coverage of immigration, Chavez et al. discuss the importance of “advocacy frames” and “objectivist frames” (p. 114). Their research showed that advocacy frames – defined as being one-sided and consensus-oriented – encouraged readers “to make judgements in favor of the opinion embedded in the stories”, thus facilitating bias (p. 114). On the other hand, objectivist frames – balanced and two-sided – did not impart bias or cause consumers to favour a particular

opinion, making them less likely “to influence public opinion and, potentially, public policy” (p. 114). Additional research on migrant media representation, particularly looking at third-party hypothetical discussion and negative framing, should examine whether the overall article content is occurring within an advocacy or objectivist setting. This is important in order to go beyond merely identifying what content is present and gauge the potential impact of these stories about migrant crime on the public and various political actors. This is also necessary to determine where reporting on migration may benefit from stereotype reduction measures – In essence, where the intention is not to perpetuate negative misconceptions or generalizations, newsmakers may consider including some instruction for readers, or clear counter-examples to balance any inadvertent negative bias (see Ramasubramanian, 2007).

Additionally, future research may include a similar analysis of reporting on migrant victimization, in order to assess characteristics and trends in stories where migrant individuals are presented as victims of crime, rather than as (potential) offenders. Further, the use of *implicit* indicators of migration should be explored, as these less direct cues may be increasing in use within news media at the expense of more blatant identifiers (Ravid, 2018); e.g., instead of stating that an individual is Hispanic or from Mexico, an article may rely on the use of an obviously Latin-American name to indicate to readers that the subject is racialized or part of a societal sub-group. This poses an important consideration for researchers examining news coverage and media representation.

In terms of the UK specifically, future research may wish to examine UK tabloid newspapers for their coverage of migration-related crime and other migration-related issues. Tabloids were specifically excluded from the current study in order to achieve comparable journalism across the three sample countries; however, tabloid newspapers are extremely popular in the UK and have been shown to exert political influence (Chadwick et al., 2018). Tabloid journalism could be examined on its own or in comparison with non-tabloid papers, in the UK and beyond.

The depth and complexity of media, migration, and crime as standalone topics presents an ongoing challenge for researchers and social actors. When taken in combination, the interconnectivity of these spheres creates a dauntingly intricate and cyclical phenomenon, the mechanisms of which are both clear and convoluted. From an

academic and research perspective, such a complex dynamic entails arduous work, repetition, revision, and spirited philosophizing. From a practical perspective, this process is normalized and pervasive to the extent that it seems to elude the repeated cries for change; cries that are supported by the aforementioned academic efforts. To conclude, media representations of migrant crime, particularly that which involves hypothetical negative generalizations or that holds positions of elevated salience, should be identified and monitored for successive impacts. Likewise, counter-narratives and independent positive representations of migration should be amplified and expanded. The media has played a role in shaping generations of knowledge and opinion, and it can similarly contribute to the unlearning of damaging and pervasive beliefs regarding migrant populations – if those at the helm can bring together the will to enact change and the tools and understanding necessary to implement it.

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<sup>10</sup> Sample articles used in the discussion are cited with a URL as Factiva did not provide page ranges for the articles; Note: many of the article titles are slightly different online than in Factiva, though the content is the same.

<sup>11</sup> This article appears as a *Washington Post* article online, in 2020, though it is identical to the *New York Times* article that was retrieved from Factiva in 2018/2019.

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## Appendix A.

### Quantitative Codebook

\*Variables with an asterisk were created in Stata to better reflect existing quantitative data and/or to quantify some of the qualitative content; these variables were not included in the original coding or reliability coefficient.

**\*\*\*GENERAL NOTE:** With the exception of the Terminology variables, when the instructions in this codebook reference ‘migrants’ or ‘migration’, please take this as an umbrella term that includes any/all mentions of migrant/migration, immigrant/immigration, refugee/refuge, asylum seeker/asylum, undocumented person, etc.

#### **STRUCTURAL CHARACTERISTICS**

1. Newspaper  
[Toronto Star = 1, Globe and Mail = 2, New York Times = 3, USA Today = 4, The Times = 5, The Guardian = 6]
2. Country\*  
[Canada = 1, UK = 2, United States = 3]
3. WordCount  
*Article word count.*
4. Word2\*  
*Word count dichotomized below median and at/above median.*
5. DatePub  
*Date of article publication. Year/month/day, e.g., 2019-12-23.*
6. Page  
*Page of newspaper on which the article appears, e.g A14. If web article/no page, code 999.*

#### **DEMOGRAPHICS**

7. Headline\_status  
*Is there mention of migration status in the headline*

*("migrant/immigrant/refugee/permanent resident" etc.), including indirect references, (such as to deportation)?*

**[yes = 1, no = 0]**

8. Race

*Does the article mention at least one **migrant** race/ethnicity/country of origin?*

**[yes = 1, no = 0]**

*Indicate the **migrant** races and ethnicities mentioned in the article:*

9. Middle Eastern

**[yes = 1, no = 0]**

10. Hispanic

**[yes = 1, no = 0]**

11. African

**[yes = 1, no = 0]**

12. Caribbean

**[yes = 1, no = 0]**

13. South Asian

**[yes = 1, no = 0]**

14. East Asian (Chinese/Japanese/Korean/Taiwanese/Vietnamese)

**[yes = 1, no = 0]**

15. Caucasian/European

**[yes = 1, no = 0]**

16. MultiRace\*

*Does the article mention more than one migrant race?*

**[yes = 1, no = 0]**

17. RaceNumber\*

*How many races are mentioned in the article? Number them off.*

18. RaceOther

*If the article mentions a race other than or in addition to those listed above, write in the 'other' migrant race/ethnicity mentioned. If n/a, code **999**.*

19. Islam

*Does the article mention Islam (including discussion of mosques, Sharia law, the hijab/niqab/burka, etc.)?*

**[yes = 1, no = 0]**

20. SocialAssist

*Does the article mention migrant social assistance/welfare, including mentions of migrants receiving benefits at the expense of citizens or migrants as a drain on resources?*

**[yes = 1, no = 0]**

21. Location

*Is the substance of the article primarily relevant to the reporting country? I.e., Is a Canadian paper primarily discussing Canadian events/context or a UK paper primarily discussing British events/context, etc.?*

**[yes = 1, no = 0]**

22. Location2

*Is the substance of the article primarily relevant to at least one of the three sample countries? I.e., crime/context in any of Canada/UK/USA = 1, crime/context primarily in an additional country = 0.*

**[sample country = 1, non-sample country = 0]**

Indicate the **terminology** used to describe migrants in the article:

23. Migrant

*Includes migrant/migration/migrating (including in the name of institutions, organizations, or branches of government).*

**[yes = 1, no = 0]**

24. Immigrant

*Includes immigrant/immigration/immigrating (including in the name of institutions, organizations, or branches of government).*

**[yes = 1, no = 0]**

25. Refugee

*Includes refugee/refuge/seeking refuge/refugee claimant (including in the name of institutions, organizations, or branches of government).*

**[yes = 1, no = 0]**

26. AsylumSeeker

*Includes asylum seeker/seeking asylum/asylum (including in the name of institutions, organizations, or branches of government).*

**[yes = 1, no = 0]**

27. Irregular\_plus

*Includes irregular/undocumented/without documents/without papers/illegal/alien/crossed border illegally/irregularly, etc. (including in the name of institutions, organizations, or branches of government). \*\*Note: this term almost always co-occurs with at least one of the other terms (e.g., "undocumented immigrant").*

**[yes = 1, no = 0]**

28. MultiTerms\*

*Does the article use more than one migration term?*

**[yes = 1, no = 0]**

29. TermNumber\*

*How many migration terms are used? Number them off.*

30. TerminologyOther

*If the article uses terminology other than or in addition to what is listed above, write in the 'other' terminology used. If n/a, code **999**.*

## **CRIME**

31. Headline\_crime

*Is there mention of crime (general or specific) in the headline, pertaining to migrants? Including terms such as "arrest", "suspect", etc.*

**[yes = 1, no = 0]**

32. Real\_Hypothetical

*Does the article discuss hypothetical migrant crime (including the potential for or risk of crime or fear of migrant crime)? Does the article discuss actual, real criminal events perpetrated by a migrant?*

*\*\*Note: Real events can be vague, as long as they are not purely speculative. Speculative would look like: "Donald Trump immediately blamed illegal immigrants for the attack on border patrol officers". This would qualify as hypothetical discussion.*

*Real-but-vague would look like: "The undocumented immigrant was deported after a series of arrests" or "Murderous refugee gang MS-13 populates Long Island" (details are not given, but reference to real crimes are there → "arrests", "murderous").*

*If a migrant is formally suspected of a crime (they have been arrested/police are looking for them/etc.) then this counts as actual, real crime. Conviction isn't necessary.*

*Additionally, a real crime by a migrant may be mentioned and then may be further discussed in the context of future risk. This would qualify as both actual and hypothetical migrant crime because the real event is spun into a "what-if" scenario.*

**[actual criminal event(s) only = 1, hypothetical discussion only = 2, both actual and hypothetical migrant crime discussed = 3]**

*\*\*\* In the case of an article where the only link to crime is through stating that there is no criminality (e.g., no criminal record/previous criminality – a statement in the negative), code as **999**.*

33. anyh\*

*Real crime only; ANY hypothetical*

**[hypothetical present = 1, actual crime only = 0]**

34. onlyh\*

*Hypothetical ONLY; any real crime*

**[hypothetical only = 1, actual crime present = 0]**

35. Crime\_focus

*Is discussing migrant crime the main reason for the article (as opposed to a by-product/passing reference/or element in another context)? A good way to determine this is to ask yourself "If the reference(s) to migrant crime were removed from this article, would there still be something to report?"*

**[reason for article = 1, within another context = 0]**

Indicate all **crime types** mentioned in the article **as they pertain to**

**migrant(s)/migration WHEN CRIME WAS COMMITTED OR DISCUSSED AS BEING**

**CAUSED BY MIGRANTS** (do not code if crime pertains solely to non-migrants or if there is no clear linkage made between the crime and any particular population).

*Please note:*

*Include forced marriage for VISA obtainment under 'Fraud' and list forced marriage itself under 'Other';*

*'Smuggling' refers to human smuggling only (not drug smuggling) and is not the same as human trafficking (list mentions of human trafficking under 'Other'); It is VERY IMPORTANT to remember that for the purposes of this study, illegal entry/overstaying a visa/misrepresentation to obtain entry are not being considered. So, in cases of human smuggling or human trafficking, these will only be coded if the perpetrators/organizers (rather than the subjects or victims) are migrants (and this means they must be operating in a country where they are not citizens; it does not count if someone organizes a human smuggling/trafficking operation to another country from within their own country).*

*'General Mention' refers to statements such as "immigrants with criminal convictions/the refugees failed their criminal record checks/migration causes crime/the recent immigrant had been arrested for a series of crimes" etc., without elaboration as to the type of crime/other details ('General Mention' can co-occur with mentions of specific crime types).*

36. Homicide  
**[yes = 1, no = 0]**
37. SexualAssault  
**[yes = 1, no = 0]**
38. Assault  
**[yes = 1, no = 0]**
39. Burglary  
**[yes = 1, no = 0]**
40. Robbery  
**[yes = 1, no = 0]**
41. Drugs  
*Using, selling, or trafficking.*  
**[yes = 1, no = 0]**
42. DUI  
*Driving under the influence.*  
**[yes = 1, no = 0]**
43. GangOrg  
*Gang or criminal organization association, membership, or activity.*  
**[yes = 1, no = 0]**
44. Harass  
*Harassment.*  
**[yes = 1, no = 0]**
45. Kidnap  
*Kidnapping.*  
**[yes = 1, no = 0]**
46. Smuggle  
*People smuggling. Please distinguish from human trafficking – smuggling occurs with consent; trafficking involves deception or coercion. However, these terms are often conflated, so if an article uses the term “human trafficking”, even if it should be called “human smuggling”, code for human trafficking in ‘Other’ column and explain.*  
**[yes = 1, no = 0]**
47. Terrorism  
**[yes = 1, no = 0]**



48. Theft  
**[yes = 1, no = 0]**
49. Fraud  
*Includes standard monetary/tax/business fraud, fake ID obtainment after initial illegal entry (e.g., obtaining fake social insurance cards to be able to seek employment, etc.), marriage for green card obtainment, and voter fraud.*  
**[yes = 1, no = 0]**
50. Vandalism  
**[yes = 1, no = 0]**
51. GeneralMention  
**[yes = 1, no = 0]**
52. Violentcrime\*  
*Code “yes” for any positively coded cases of homicide, sexual assault, assault, robbery, kidnapping, or terrorism (also “other” column if applicable).*  
**[yes = 1, no = 0]**
53. Propertycrime\*  
*Code “yes” for any positively coded cases of burglary, theft, fraud, or vandalism (also “other” column in applicable).*  
**[yes = 1, no = 0]**
54. Othercrime  
*Code “yes” for any positively coded cases of drugs, DUI, gangorg, harass, or smuggle (also “other” column if applicable).*
55. Multicrime\*  
*Does the article mention more than one of the above three crime groups?*  
**[yes = 1, no = 0]**
56. Genmenonly\*  
*Code “yes” if the article only has a general mention of crime.*  
**[yes = 1, no = 0]**
57. Other  
*List any additional crime types mentioned.*
58. NegativeCrim  
*Does the article contain statements about migrant criminality in the negative? E.g., “None of the immigrant recruits had ties to terrorist organizations” or “the refugees had no criminal records” or “migration is not linked to crime”, etc.*  
**[yes = 1, no = 0]**

## **OTHER INFORMATION**

59. ProMigrant

*Does the article mention the 'pros' of migration? E.g., supporting economy, providing labour that born citizens don't want to do, remedying declining birthrate, paying taxes, contributing to cultural diversity (framed in a positive way), bringing higher levels of education and expertise, etc.?*

**[yes = 1, no = 0]**

60. ConMigrant\*

*Does the article mention 'cons' to migration? E.g., risk of crime; threats to values, resources, or jobs?*

61. Mirgquote

*Does the article directly quote a migrant? If people who MIGHT be migrants are being quoted, but it is not clear/explicit enough, code as **999**.*

**[yes = 1, no = 0]**

62. AltRight\_Nazi

*Does the article mention the Alt-right, far-right, Nazism/Neo-nazism or white supremacy? \*\*Note: "right-wing" is not sufficient by itself, must reference "far/alt" right or something else indicating extremism.*

**[yes = 1, no = 0]**

63. USA\_focus

*Is the content of the article USA focused?*

**[yes = 1, no = 0]**

64. ICE

*Does the article mention Immigration and Customs Enforcement/ICE?*

**[yes = 1, no = 0]**

65. Wall

*Does the article mention Trump's wall?*

**[yes = 1, no = 0]**

66. Detention

*Does the article mention [im]migration detention? This does not include detention in prison for criminal reasons; include [im]migration detention for deportation/screening only.*

**[yes = 1, no = 0]**

67. Deport

*Does the article mention deportation?*

**[yes = 1, no = 0]**

68. UKpol

*Does the article mention Brexit, the Windrush generation/Windrush scandal, or the UK's hostile environment immigration policy? These are all UK specific things that have roots in anti-immigration sentiment.*

**[yes = 1, no = 0]**

## Appendix B.

### Qualitative Code Book

#### **(1) POSITIVE DISCUSSION:**

\*\*\* In this category, articles can fall under multiple themes.

##### **Key themes**

- **Credentials:** *Migrants mentioned as possessing qualifications or credentials or skills needed or desired by the host country; Or, migrants mentioned as a benefit to the host country because of their qualifications, credentials, or skills.*
- **Crime reduction:** *Migrants mentioned as reducing crime/crime rates in the host country.*
- **Cultural:** *Migrants mentioned as enriching or having some kind of positive impact on the culture of a host country.*
- **Economy**
  - **Jobs:** *Migrants mentioned as contributing positively to the labour market; filling jobs, creating jobs, etc. Focused on providing needed labour.*
  - **Money:** *Migrants mentioned as making a monetary contribution to the economy; increasing revenue through taxes, purchasing property, entrepreneurial pursuits, etc. Focused on contributing wealth.*
  - **Non-distinct:** *Migrants mentioned in relation to the economy, but without specification as to 'money' or 'jobs'.*
- **State interest:** *The pro-migrant content is expressed in terms of how it benefits the host country; E.g., "Immigrants are entrepreneurial and start businesses at a faster rate than the native-born" vs. "Immigrants start businesses and fill jobs that are generally unwanted by native-citizens" – The second statement expresses*

*self-interest. Most economic related statements fall under 'self-interest', but sometimes other content does as well.*

## **(2)NEGATIVE DISCUSSION:**

\*\*\* In this category, articles can fall under multiple themes.

### **Key themes**

- **Jobs:** *Migrants are mentioned as stealing/taking/limiting employment for born citizens.*
- **Links with crime:** *This is the "Hypothetical crime" theme; all content is generalized associations of migration with crime and criminality. This theme was first coded broadly, followed by the categorization of content into the following sub-themes:*  
***Crime (Generic or Other); Race or Religion; Homicide; Undocumented; Borders; Gangs; Failure of State; Sexual Assault; Terrorism; Manipulation; "Rapists and Criminals"; 'Over There'; Refugees/Asylum Seekers; Drugs; Wolf in Sheep's Clothing.***
- **Resources:** *Migrants mentioned as stressing, unfairly accessing, or limiting things like welfare, the health system, subsidies, etc., for born citizens. It also includes mentions of excessive government cost/spending on migration related issues.*
- **Values:** *Migrants mentioned in relation to community/cultural cohesion concerns, integration concerns, as well as more vague references to "fairness" or born citizens being "left behind" or "forgotten" (An 'Americans/Canadians/Britons first' value expression).*

## Appendix C.

### General Article Topics

Table C1 illustrates the general topics of the articles, by number of qualitative themes/sub-themes, from the analyses of positive and negative discussion of migration. This table does not represent individual articles in the analyses, but rather demonstrates the broader article topics within which the positive and negative discussion occurs. In many cases, multiple articles have been condensed under an overarching topic and thus the relevant themes are likewise condensed and listed together.

**Table C1. Qualitative thematic content by general article topic**

Overall broad article topic	Positive theme present	Negative theme/sub-theme present
The attack of two border officers in the US		Borders
The need for migrant labour and the counterfeit identification industry in the US	Economy	
Citizenship in Denmark	Economy	
Racial tensions in the UK		Gangs
Doug Ford and his politics in Canada		Jobs
Suspected arson at a refugee housing complex in Toronto		Resources
A racist Conservative party ad in Canada		Resources
Neo-Nazism in Germany		State Failure
Knife-attacks in Vienna		Terrorism
Trump and the GOP (Grand Old Party)		Undocumented
Live-in caregivers in Canada	Credentials; Economy	
MAVNI (Military Accessions Vital to National Interests) – recruiting migrants into the US military	Credentials; State Interest	
Racial tensions and Black political candidacy in the US		Crime (Generic or Other); Race or Religion
Rising sexual abuse and slavery in the UK		Drugs; Undocumented
Pro-Trump county sheriffs in the US		Gangs; Undocumented
The death of a Texas border agent		Homicide; Race or Religion
Waning support for Republicans in the US		Homicide; Undocumented
Racism and discrimination in Quebec		Homicide; Values

Overall broad article topic	Positive theme present	Negative theme/sub-theme present
A German populist talk show		Refugees/Asylum Seekers
Political divisiveness in the UK		Resources; Values
Undocumented immigration in the US		Borders; State Failure; Undocumented
Immigration raids and deportation in the US	Economy	Crime (Generic or Other); Race or Religion
Trump versus the media		Gangs; Homicide; Undocumented
US Congress and the 'immigrant crisis'		Homicide; "Rapists and Criminals"; Sexual Assault
Asylum anxieties in El Paso, Texas		Homicide; Resources; Undocumented
Michelle Obama's opinion on Trump and the news cycle		Race or Religion; "Rapists and Criminals"; Sexual Assault
Social resistance to Trump's politics		Race or Religion; Sexual Assault; Wolf in Sheep's Clothing
Sociopolitical divisiveness in the US		Borders; Homicide; Race or Religion; Undocumented
The relationship between Trump and former White House strategist, Steve Bannon		Borders; Race or Religion; "Rapists and Criminals"; Sexual Assault
Racism in politics in the US		Crime (Generic or Other); Drugs; 'Over There'; Values
Racist remarks by the Home Secretary regarding child grooming gangs in the UK	Culture; Economy	Gangs; Sexual Assault
Border closure and government shutdown in the US		Crime (Generic or Other); Gangs; 'Over There'; Race or Religion
The Latin American migrant caravan		Crime (Generic or Other); Gangs; Terrorism; Values
Declining crime rates in Germany		Crime (Generic or Other); 'Over There'; Refugees/Asylum Seekers; Sexual Assault
Trump's 'Brand'		Crime (Generic or Other); Race or Religion; "Rapists and Criminals"; Sexual Assault
Denaturalization		Crime (Generic or Other); State Failure; Terrorism; Wolf in Sheep's Clothing
The increasing number of female elected officials in the US		Homicide; Manipulation; Race or Religion; Refugees/Asylum Seekers
Political attack ads		Homicide; Manipulation; "Rapists and Criminals"; Sexual Assault
Trump's CPAC (Conservative Political Action Conference) speech		Manipulation; 'Over There'; Terrorism; Wolf in Sheep's Clothing

Overall broad article topic	Positive theme present	Negative theme/sub-theme present
German lawmakers and racism tweets		Race or Religion; Refugees/Asylum Seekers; Sexual Assault; Wolf in Sheep's Clothing
A controversial radio host in Quebec		Race or Religion; Terrorism; Values; Wolf in Sheep's Clothing
Anti-Muslim social media posts by a Canadian school principal		Race or Religion; Refugees/Asylum Seekers; Terrorism; Wolf in Sheep's Clothing
German chancellor Angela Merkel's handling of the refugee crisis		Refugees/Asylum Seekers; Resources; Terrorism; Values
Europe's offshore migrant camps		Borders; Crime (Generic or Other); State Failure; Values
Sanctuary cities in the US		Borders; Homicide; Race or Religion; "Rapists and Criminals"; Sexual Assault
US midterm and State elections		Crime (Generic or Other); Homicide; Race or Religion; Sexual Assault; Undocumented
'Angel' families and MS-13 in the US		Gangs; Homicide; Manipulation; Race or Religion; Undocumented
Immigrant gang violence in the US		Homicide; Manipulation; Race or Religion; State Failure; Undocumented
Religious leaders who support Trump		Homicide; Race or Religion; "Rapists and Criminals"; Sexual Assault; Undocumented
Asylum seekers and social housing in the UK		Manipulation; Race or Religion; Refugees/Asylum Seekers; Sexual Assault; Values
Trump's voter appeal and influence		Manipulation; Race or Religion; Sexual Assault; Terrorism; Jobs
Europe's successful integration of migrants		Borders; Crime (Generic or Other); Gangs; 'Over There'; Resources; Values
Racism and Islamophobia in the UK		Borders; Crime (Generic or Other); Race or Religion; Resources; Terrorism; Values
Trump's political history and character		Borders; Homicide; Race or Religion; "Rapists and Criminals"; Sexual Assault; Undocumented
The demography of voters in the US	State Interest	Drugs; Homicide; Resources; Values
Trump as a threat to America		Jobs; "Rapists and Criminals"; State Failure; Sexual Assault; Terrorism; Values



Overall broad article topic	Positive theme present	Negative theme/sub-theme present
Political protections for young migrants in the US		Borders; Crime (Generic or Other); Drugs; Gangs; Race or Religion; Undocumented; Values
Trump's visit to California to view the border wall prototype	Economy	Borders; Crime (Generic or Other); Homicide; Resources; State Failure; Undocumented
The Quebec mosque shooting		Homicide; 'Over There'; Race or Religion; Refugees/Asylum Seekers; State Failure; Terrorism; Wolf in Sheep's Clothing
Upcoming candidates and political campaigning		Borders; Crime (Generic or Other); Gangs; Homicide; Race or Religion; Terrorism; Undocumented; Wolf in Sheep's Clothing
UK summary news piece (multiple stories)	Credentials; Culture; Economy	Crime (Generic or Other); Jobs; Manipulation; 'Over There'; Race or Religion
Empirical studies on migration's link with crime	Culture; Crime Reduction; Economy	Crime (Generic or Other); Drugs; Homicide; Race or Religion; Undocumented
Political approach to asylum seekers by the Liberal and Conservative parties of Canada	Credentials; Economy	Jobs; Race or Religion; Refugees/Asylum Seekers; Resources; Terrorism; Values; Wolf in Sheep's Clothing
The employment of undocumented immigrants at Trump's resorts	Economy	Borders; Crime (Generic or Other); Drugs; Jobs; Race or Religion; "Rapists and Criminals"; Sexual Assault; Undocumented; Values
Trump's SOTU (State of the Union) speech		Borders; Crime (Generic or Other); Drugs; Gangs; Homicide; Jobs; Race or Religion; State Failure; Undocumented; Values
The plight of Latin American asylum seekers travelling to North America	Economy	Crime (Generic or Other); Homicide; Manipulation; 'Over There'; Race or Religion; "Rapists and Criminals"; Resources; Sexual Assault; Values
Rising populism, anti-immigration and the far-right in Europe		Crime (Generic or Other); Drugs; Homicide; 'Over There'; Race or Religion; Refugees/Asylum Seekers; Resources; Sexual Assault; State Failure; Values

Overall broad article topic	Positive theme present	Negative theme/sub-theme present
US child detention/family separation policy		Borders; Crime (Generic or Other); Gangs; Homicide; 'Over There'; Race or Religion; "Rapists and Criminals"; Sexual Assault; State Failure; Undocumented; Values
Migrant-perpetrated homicide		Crime (Generic or Other); Gangs; Homicide; Manipulation; Race or Religion; "Rapists and Criminals"; Refugees/Asylum Seekers; Sexual Assault; Terrorism; Undocumented; Values; Wolf in Sheep's Clothing
Anti-immigration efforts and enforcement and sentiment in the US		Borders; Crime (Generic or Other); Drugs; Gangs; Homicide; Manipulation; 'Over There'; Race or Religion; "Rapists and Criminals"; Resources; Sexual Assault; State Failure; Terrorism; Undocumented; Values

Note: This table is not meant to demonstrate the exact co-occurrence of thematic content within individual articles, nor does each general article topic description necessarily represent a single article.